NINTENDO POWER

Reviews Blowout! • C.O.P. The Recruit
Shantae: Risky's Revenge • Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles • Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky

247
NOVEMBER 2009
SUBSCRIBER EDITION

Bring the Stars into Alignment!

ゴスペルか……
ハーレムの魂の歌なんだね。

切り替え
もどる
ヘルプ

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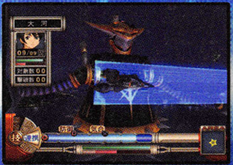
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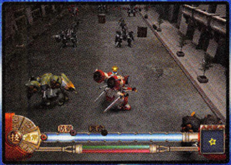
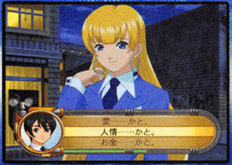

•Steer your mechs in the
free-roaming battle system!


愛……かと。
人情……かと。
お金……かと。

•Power up characters
through interaction!

•Samurais in 1920s
Steampunk New York?

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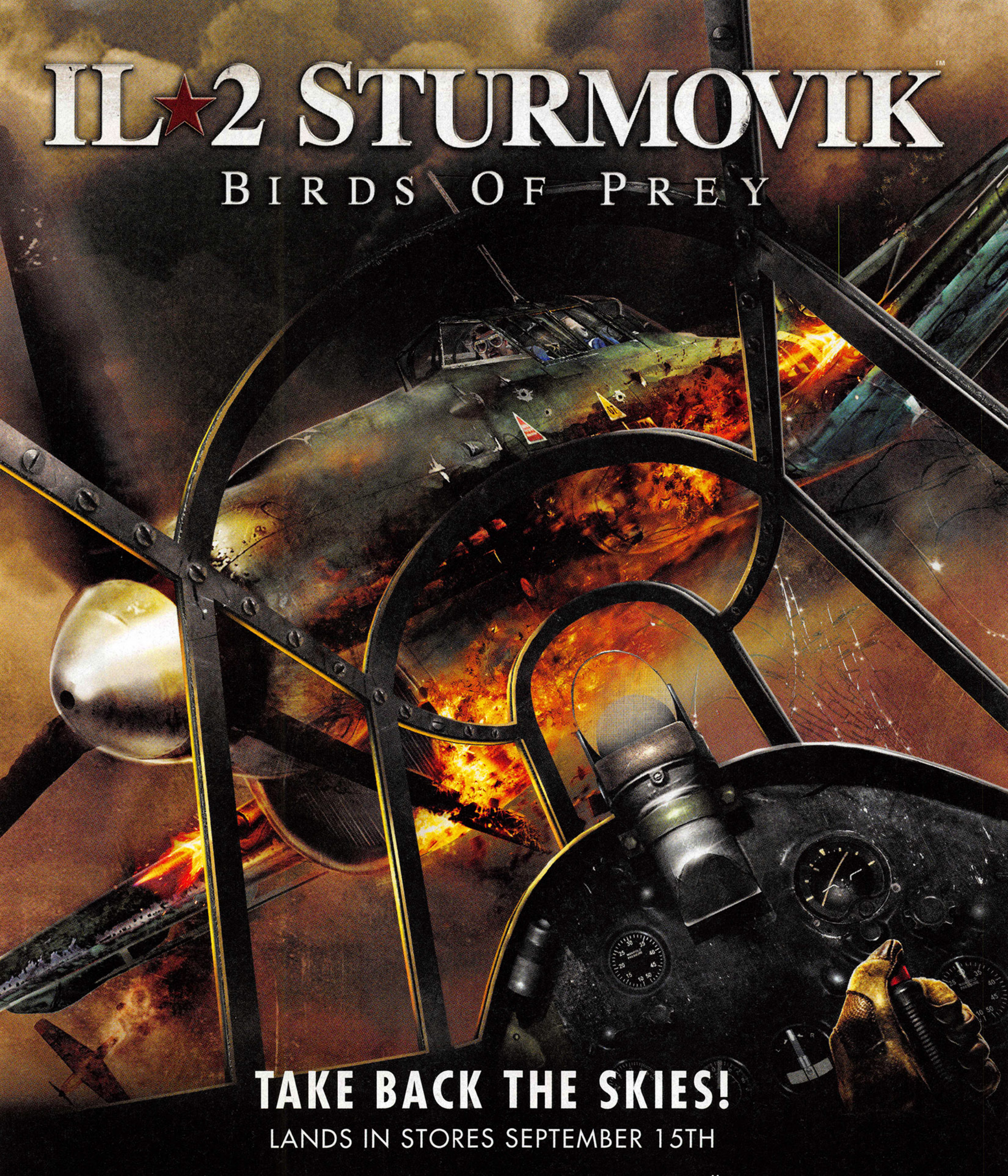

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TEEN T Mild Language Violence ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

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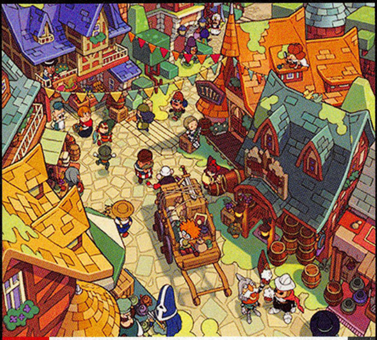

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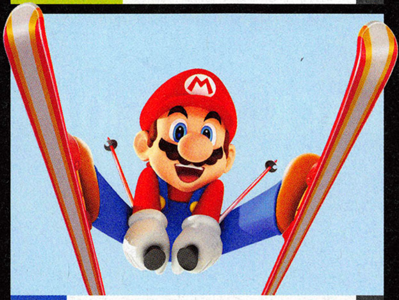

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DS = NINTENDO DS
DW = DSiWare
N64 = NINTENDO 64
VC = VIRTUAL CONSOLE
Wii = Wii
WW = WiiWare

NEWS 🟥
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MySims™ AGENTS SWEEPSTAKES

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BE AN AGENT?

ENTER THE MySims™ AGENTS SWEEPSTAKES. SUBMIT YOUR POSTCARD FOR A CHANCE TO WIN:

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Wii
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No purchase is necessary to win. To enter, print your name, address, day-time telephone number, e-mail address (if you have one) and "MySims Agents Sweepstakes" on a 3 x 5 card and mail it to: MySims Agents Sweepstakes C/O Nintendo Power, 4000 Shoreline Court, South San Francisco, Ste. 400, CA 94080. One entry per person. Entries must be received no later than 11:59 pm PST on November 15, 2009. The winners will be chosen on or about November 22, 2009, and will be notified by email (or regular mail). The odds of winning depend upon the number of entries received. The sponsor of the contest is Future US, Inc. ("Future US"), 4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. One (1) Grand Prize Package will be awarded. One (1) winner will receive their choice of either a Wii™ console or a Nintendo DSi™ system, a Wild Planet Super Mission Kit, plus a copy of the My Sims™ Agents video game for the Wii™ or Nintendo DS™. (total ARV: $459.93). The prizes are nontransferable and no substitutions will be allowed. Winners will be determined by a single random drawing of all valid entries. This contest is open to legal residents of the United States only, excluding Rhode Island and Puerto Rico. Entrants must be at least 9 years of age. For a complete list of rules go to page 69.

EA Wii™ NINTENDO DS™

EVERYONE
E
Comic Mischief
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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Pulse

Things Get Bigger in November

Chris Slate

You don't have to check the month on the cover to know that the holidays are fast approaching; you just have to swing by the Reviews section. With a rush of new games headed to the Wii and Nintendo DS systems, we've had to stretch the section to its biggest size ever—a whopping 11 pages! And it isn't just that there are a *lot* of reviews this month, but that they include some of the biggest titles of the year, such as Scribblenauts, Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days, Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Smash-Up, The Beatles: Rock Band, A Boy and His Blob, and Dead Space Extraction! Whew! It was hard, grueling work playing them all, but we did it just for you. Download is also the biggest it's ever been, and features what seems sure to be the best DSiWare game by a mile. If you enjoy reading about lots of great games, this is definitely the issue for you!

CHRIS SLATE **EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Double Mario!
Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games
Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story
NINTENDO POWER
WE CELEBRATE 20 YEARS of the SEGA GENESIS
PLATFORMER REVOLUTION
The SECRET is OUT!
AVATAR
The sci-fi epic hits Wii with an exclusive adventure from the studio behind Assassin's Creed and Prince of Persia!
future

V246 OCTOBER 2009

Chris Slate here, back once again to answer your letters while simultaneously reviewing 10 games. But first, this month's special letter request: if you could change any one thing about any one game, what would it be? Send your responses to the address on page 8, and we'll print the best ones!

LETTERS

HAPPY NINTENDO DAY!

Why isn't there a Nintendo Day? One day every year, people around the world could play Nintendo games, eat Nintendo-themed food, put on mustaches and pointy ears, and have an 8-bit Mario soundtrack playing for 24 hours straight. Nintendo could even commemorate the occassion by releasing a huge game that day.

—J_BUSH

Here at Nintendo Power, we call what you just described "Monday through Friday."

TO THE LIBRARY!

I love my library; I really do. Even though it's in the midst of renovations that limit me to only half the normal stock, I still love it. Why? Because the good librarians are adding video games to the collection! And trust me; someone over there really knows what they're doing—their list of games includes great titles such as Chrono Trigger, Super Mario Galaxy, and a heck of a lot of Final Fantasy. I nearly hyperventilated when I saw The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess on the list. I borrow my friend's copy all the time, but I've never had the funds to buy it for myself. It seems that librarians have really good taste in video games. Who knew? **—ASH**

IF HANDHELDS COULD TALK

I recently purchased a Nintendo DSi and began to wonder what it would say to me if it could talk. For some reason, I think that my new system would be pretty grumpy, spouting things like "Turn off Pokémon and play some Brain Age!" or "Stop taking pictures of yourself, Mr. Narcissist!" Hopefully it wouldn't mind my taste in downloads from the Nintendo DSi Shop. ("Are you kidding me? Use your 200 points on that one instead!") What about you guys? Are your handhelds fuming at the circuits, or calm and content? **—LUKE H.**

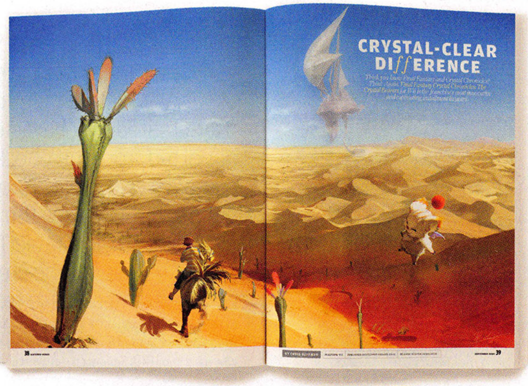
Justin claims that his handheld spreads lies about him, but then, he accuses pretty much everything of that.

HAND-CRAFTED

It makes me happy to see that hand-drawn art is making it into video games with such titles as Muramasa and A Boy and His Blob. I remember when 3-D polygonal figures became all the rage, so to see traditional 2-D platforming come back into style is very exciting. I loved Vol. 244, by the way: the cover was hand-drawn!

—(NO NAME GIVEN)

I squealed with joy after I finished reading all 12 pages of your Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers feature! Square Enix has done a fabulous job with the game's graphics and character design, and the story seems very compelling. I think I might have to start saving for that chocobo plush I saw the other day! **—CMAN**


CRYSTAL-CLEAR DIFFERENCE

FOX TEASE

After being thoroughly impressed by Wii Sports Resort's Island Flyover event, an idea popped into my head: why doesn't Nintendo build off that engine to make a new Star Fox game for Wii? Imagine flying your Arwing with the precision of Wii MotionPlus. Simple turns of the wrist would have you barrel-rolling through Corneria with the greatest of ease! **—ALEX M.**

After playing Island Flyover in Wii Sports Resort, I was completely convinced that a new Star Fox game is not only possible, but is coming in the near future. I mean, did you see all of the things you could do in Island Flyover?! You can shoot lasers from your plane, slow down and speed up, and even do a barrell roll! A *barrel roll*!! **—MICHELLE G.**

We wholeheartedly support the idea of a new Star Fox on Wii, and Peppy adds, "*Do a barrel roll!*"

Wii THE MATCHMAKER

I just got engaged with the help of my Wii! After my girlfriend left work, I took a picture of the ring and uploaded it to my system using the SD card slot. I then used the doodle feature in the Photo Channel to write "Will you marry me?" around the ring, and then added a couple of heart stamps and sent the picture to our message board. That night, after enjoying a romantic dinner that I had prepared, I suggested that we play Wii, which is one of our favorite pastimes. After sitting nervously as she checked out the new voting topic for the day, I mentioned that we should check out the messages, but to my dismay, they did not show up at first! She was finally able to open the picture, at which point I leaned in close with the real ring and asked her to marry me, and of course she said yes. Afterward, I found out that she was confused by the picture at first, thinking that Mario had sent the message to confess his undying love for her! **—KRISLOVESNICOLE**

Congrats on scooping her up before Mario got his chance! But don't forget about Bowser—you don't want him carrying your bride off from the reception.

TWO SAMUSES ARE BETTER THAN ONE

It would be great if Nintendo made a co-op Metroid game. Both people could play as Samus—her molecules would get split or something, causing there to be two of her, and they would go on a journey to return to normal. Each Samus would have half the normal expansions and half the health. Also, just think of all the cool stuff you could do with two Samuses. Like, one Samus could scan a switch to open a faraway door that the other Samus could then enter. A game like that would be awesome. **—JOHN AND KENNETH R.**

Throw in online play and I'm right there with you guys!

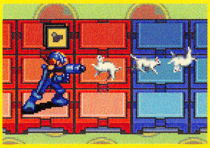
MYSTERY MESSAGE

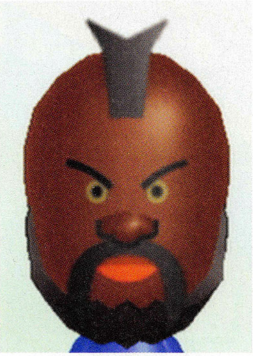
I have been a subscriber for about 20 years on and off, and ever since you talked about the subscriber editions being different, I have been paying more attention to covers. Over the last few months, I noticed that the word MARIO was on my mailing label. I was pretty curious as to why that would be there. I wondered if there might be different versions of the subscriber edition, like maybe there would also be a PEACH or BOWSER version. I didn't think about it too much, so it wasn't until later that I realized that it didn't say MARIO, but MAR10 (March 10), and it was simply my expiration date. I couldn't help laughing at myself. **—CPL1701**

DON'T HASSLE THE HOFF

I was playing a favorite game of mine, Mega Man Battle Network 4, and I realized that I had no clue what comes out of Mega Man's Buster. Is it bullets? Short bursts of laser beams? I have no Idea! **—PROTOFAN51**

The Hoff says: Normally Mega Man shoots so fast that you can't see what he's firing, but by using special equipment available only to the NP crew, we were able to slow down time to find out. As you might suspect, it's a collection of discarded foodstuffs, unwanted copies of 3 Ninjas Kick Back for the Super NES, and the occasional rabid kitty-cat thrown in for good measure. The manual to the first Mega Man Battle Network says the Buster fires bullets, but obviously that's a blatant lie.





Wii Sports Resort is a great game. I especially like the fact that random user-created Mii characters can be imported from the Check Mii Out channel to serve as allies or opponents, although this makes the game unfair. I ended up playing Table Tennis against a Mr. T that someone created, and he clobbered me. Please fix this. **—SEPPIE**

Actually, your opponent's difficulty is based only on your rank at the sport and isn't affected by who a Mii looks like. It appears that you were simply intimidated, for which no one could blame you.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF Wii SPORTS RESORT AND Wii MOTIONPLUS?

I have to admit, I wasn't the biggest fan of the first Wii Sports. It was a great bundle game, but I would only bring it out during parties since I found the single-player experience to be lacking. This is not the case, however, with Wii Sports Resort. I bought it as an upgrade for my Wii Sports parties and to get the Wii MotionPlus accessory, but I was surprised to find that the new events have tons of depth and hidden secrets that make it a great single-player game as well. **—LEE**

This game is amazing! When it was first announced that the Wii console would have motion controls, this is what everybody was expecting. My only complaint is with canoeing—sometimes when you change the side that you're rowing on, your Mii doesn't. But it's easy to work around. Bottom line: this game is incredibly fun. **—REWINDFROG**

The Wii Remote/Wii MotionPlus combo is by far my favorite video game controller yet. With them, controls feel much more realistic, which makes it easier for me to enjoy games. I got Wii Sports Resort (which has become my fourth-favorite all-time game) the day it came out, before they'd even put it up on shelves! My favorite sport in the game is Archery. **—SETH P.**

I think that Wii Sports Resort is a thousand times better than the original Wii Sports, and it truly shows that the Wii MotionPlus is an excellent device that unlocks a whole new universe of possibilities for Wii games. **—AARON K.**

I have been playing Wii Sports Resort nonstop for the past two days, and I can say with 100% certainty that this is my all-time favorite game! My top events are Island Flyover (I love exploring), Swordplay (all three modes), and Table Tennis. All of the games are magnificent, though, with a lot of great attention to detail. I'm disappointed at the lack of Wi-Fi Connection play, but other than that, this is a must-have game for Wii! **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

I love Wii Sports Resort and the Wii MotionPlus, but I hate how you have to recalibrate the controller all the time. Also, I was expecting to be able to shoot down planes in the Dog Fight mode and not just pop their balloons. Other than that, it's a really good game. **—(NO NAME GIVEN)**

The Wii MotionPlus accessory adds new possibilities, but does not resolve much of the imprecision that is common to all motion-controlled games. My favorite Wii titles are still the button-based ones such as Mega Man 9, Punch-Out!!, and Fire Emblem. Nothing beats the tried and true, 100-percent-precise buttons. **—FLUX RIDER**

Swordplay is by far the best game in Wii Sports Resort. In Duel, I became a pro in 10 minutes! Pickup Game is a close second. **—ALEX BRAKE**

It seems that most of you really like Wii Sports Resort and Wii MotionPlus! While no game is for everyone, only a couple of the many letters you sent didn't consider Resort a big success.

CORRECTION In last month's preview of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Arcade Attack for Nintendo DS, we incorrectly identified the game as a Wii title. (Hopefully, the dual-screen graphics gave away our mistake.)

PLEASE WRITE US

pulse@nintendopower.com

OR VIA CARRIER PIGEON AT

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South San Francisco, CA 94080

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Understand that the magazine staff is separate from Nintendo; we don't make the games.

Don't send links to game coverage on the Web—trust us; we see it all.

Don't ask about the status of upcoming games, or whether certain games will be announced; if we have that info, we'll always tell you.

NINTENDO POWER

BARRY BURTON FANS

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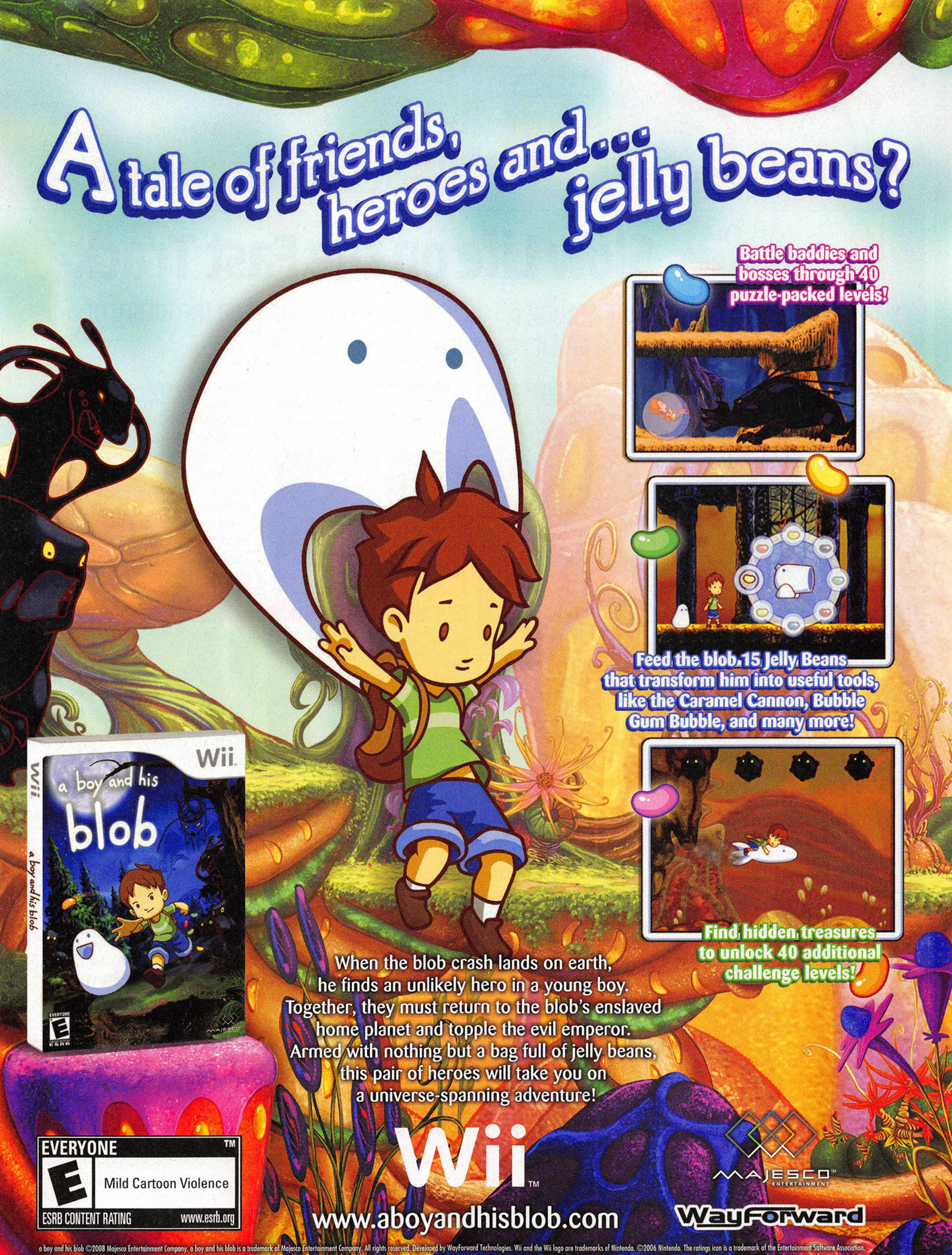
A tale of friends, heroes and... jelly beans?
Battle baddies and bosses through 40 puzzle-packed levels!
Feed the blob 15 Jelly Beans that transform him into useful tools, like the Caramel Cannon, Bubble Gum Bubble, and many more!
Find hidden treasures to unlock 40 additional challenge levels!
Wii
a boy and his blob
EVERYONE
E
Mild Cartoon Violence
ESRB CONTENT RATING
www.esrb.org
Wii
MAJESCO ENTERTAINMENT
WayForward

When the blob crash lands on earth, he finds an unlikely hero in a young boy. Together, they must return to the blob's enslaved home planet and topple the evil emperor. Armed with nothing but a bag full of jelly beans, this pair of heroes will take you on a universe-spanning adventure!

www.aboyandhisblob.com

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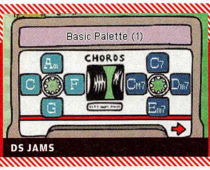


DS JAMS

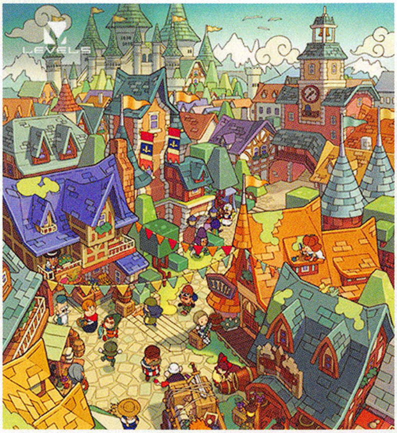
WEIRD, WILD STUFF

HIP-HOP HERO

NEWS *from* JAPAN!

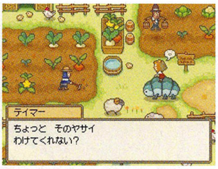
Slow Life on the Fast Track

Trendsetting DS developer Level-5 has seen the future of RPGs, and it may surprise you.



When the Professor Layton series emerged as an international smash hit, Level-5 became one of Japan's top publishers overnight. The company hasn't forgotten the platform that elevated them to the big time; at their annual Level-5 Vision Conference they announced a 2010 lineup composed almost entirely of titles for the Nintendo DS handheld.

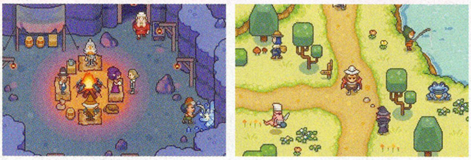
The most intriguing of the newly announced games is titled simply Fantasy Life. Described by Level-5 president Akihiro Hino as a "slow-



テイマー

ちょっと そのヤサイ
わけてくれない？

FANTASY LIFE



INSIDE the BOX

Amidst a bevy of new game announcements, we talk with the president of Level-5 about his latest release, Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box.

While hosting the Level-5 Vision Conference, leading the development of a number of upcoming games, and starring in this month's Power Profiles (see page 70), Level-5 president Akihiro Hino found the time to chat with us about his most recent North American title, Professor Layton and The Diabolical Box. Read on for Hino's insights into the creation of the game, as well as his thoughts on the smash-hit Professor Layton series.

NINTENDO POWER What do you consider to be the biggest difference between The Diabolical Box and the first game in the Professor Layton series?

AKIHIRO HINO Compared to the last game, The Curious Village, everything has been pumped up. The Diabolical Box fills up twice as much space on the Game Card as the first title—the number of animated scenes has more than doubled and the number of puzzles has increased. The story is even more epic. This time we also included a song in the ending theme, so I hope you see the ending and find it moving.

What was the biggest challenge in creating Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box?

The release date was within 10 months of The Curious Village's release and we had to develop more content than the first game in a short time span, so managing the schedule was difficult. There are many improvements from the last game and it is packed with puzzles to be solved.

Did you apply anything that you learned while making the first game to The Diabolical Box?

In The Curious Village, puzzles that were not directly related to the plot popped up as you progressed through the game. We rethought that point in The Diabolical Box and adjusted it so the puzzles occurred naturally within the context of the story.

What was the inspiration for the story of The Diabolical Box?

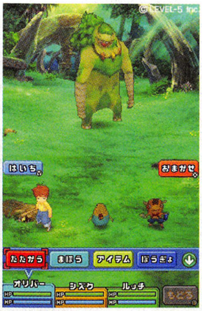
Layton's biggest thrill is explaining the impossible, and we felt it would be scary if there were a box that would kill whoever opened it.

How did you come up with the art style for the Professor Layton series?

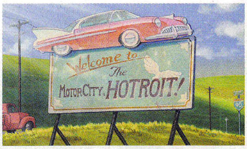
We had already decided that the main character would be the English gentleman Layton, so we life RPG," it features an Animal Crossing-esque world in which you make a character and then select one of 20 lives to lead, such as that of a guard, a merchant, or a miner. You then go about the daily tasks associated with your chosen life, attaining wealth and happiness before moving on to the next new and different (but still slow) life. You can live your lives in one of two fantasy kingdoms; one populated by computer-controlled NPCs, and one populated by other players living their own lives over Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. Fantasy Life is being made by Brownie Brown, the developers of the early Secret of Mana titles and most recently of Blue Dragon Plus, and features a soundtrack by renowned Final Fantasy composer Nobuo Uematsu.

Hino also lifted the veil on the first game in a new Layton trilogy, Professor Layton and the Devil's Flute. This chapter takes place three years before the events in Professor Layton and the Curious Village, and concerns a mysterious titan on a rampage of destruction. Once players complete the main quest, which features the usual mix of puzzle-solving and story-telling, they'll unlock a special bonus: another slow-life RPG by Brownie Brown! Titled Professor Layton's London Life, players will create an avatar and select a life to lead in Professor Layton-era London. Despite being an unlockable bonus mode, Hino promises that it will offer 100 hours of content.

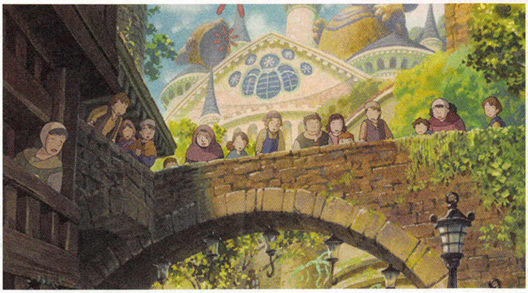
Finally, Level-5 gave an update on Ninokuni: The Another World, their hotly anticipated non-slow-life RPG created in partnership with the legendary Studio Ghibli (the animation studio behind *My Neighbor Totoro*, *Spirited Away*, and the recent *Ponyo*). It was announced that Studio Ghibli composer Joe Hisaishi would be joining the project, and that in order to fit in his fully orchestrated soundtrack, Ninokuni will come on a 4-gigabit cartridge, making it the largest Nintendo DS game ever made. The game will also ship with a book of magic runes that can be copied to the DS touch screen to cast spells in the game. Ninokuni was originally announced as a 2009 release, but has now slipped to 2010. **—CASEY L.**

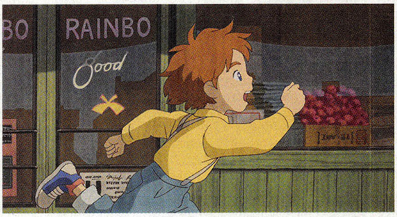


NINOKUNI: THE ANOTHER WORLD



Taste the rich, fantasy flavor of...alternate-Earth Detroit?





aimed to create an elegant atmosphere evoking Europe's good old days. The development staff referred to pictures and materials about Europe and created a detailed fantasy world for the game to take place in.

What part of the characters and game setup do you find the most charming in the Professor Layton series?
I think one point is the art. It's very high-caliber, but also has a comic style that is easy to relate to. As for the way the game is set up, it's how the other characters capture the traditional characteristics of the mystery so well.

Is there a character in The Diabolical Box that you are particularly fond of?
Anthony.

We heard that puzzles that relied heavily on the Japanese language had to be cut for the North American version. Is this true?
That's correct—the puzzles that used Japanese or Japanese customs were removed and we put in new puzzles for North America.

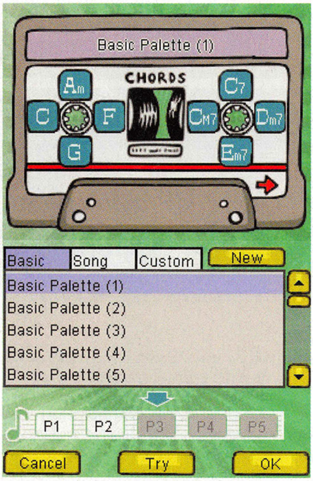
Without giving anything away, what sorts of surprises will players have to look forward to as they get deeper into Diabolical Box?
The mystery of The Diabolical Box gets deeper and deeper and many characters in the game, such as Anthony and Sophia, have secrets. I hope everyone figures out the feelings and hidden meanings of the characters related to the Elysian Box.

If you were going to give three points of advice to someone new to the Professor Layton series, what would they be?
These games can be enjoyed by people who are new to games. Many people have told us that Professor Layton was the first game they had ever completed. And when you get stuck on a puzzle, use hints. Please try to play all the way through to see the surprising conclusion at the end! Figuring out the story's biggest mystery while solving the riddles (puzzle problems) that pop up in the narrative is what the Professor Layton series is all about. Find out the story behind it all! Please do your best to clear the three minigames as well! The game contains plenty of modes to enjoy after finishing it, such as the three minigames or downloadable puzzles. Please see everything that Professor Layton has to offer.

Finally, why do you feel everyone should play Professor Layton and The Diabolical Box?
The Diabolical Box expands greatly on the previous game. The concept is "puzzle solving and movie-quality animation." The high-quality animation could be shown at a movie theater. The game contains more than the previous game and it helps the story unfold dramatically. A moving ending waits at the end! Please try using your own skills to solve the mystery of the legendary artifact, the Elysian Box, of which it's said that the person who opens it will definitely die.

Heart and Soul

Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky isn't the only big news for Pokémon fans this month. Pokémon Gold Version and Pokémon Silver Version—two classic Game Boy adventures—will soon evolve into **Pokémon HeartGold** and **SoulSilver** for Nintendo DS! Players will get the chance to revisit the Johto region and enjoy enhanced graphics and sound, new touch-screen controls, and more next spring. **—CHRIS SL.**



Back in Session

Ubisoft has announced that **Jam Sessions 2** will be rocking the Nintendo DS this fall. For those unfamiliar with the previous title, it's not so much a traditional music video game as it is a tool designed to develop your guitar skills and songwriting abilities. The sequel promises a deeper recording studio, the ability to pluck individual strings, and multiple types of guitars. It will also be compatible with the Nintendo DSi, allowing you to use the camera as a wah-wah pedal. (Your guess is as good as ours.) **—STEVE T.**

GAME WATCH

forecast

Wii		
101-in-1 Party Megamix	Atlus	10/09
Academy of Champions	Ubisoft	11/09
All Star Cheer Squad 2	THQ	10/09
Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel	Majesco	HOL 09
Arc Rise Fantasia	XSEED	2/10
Astro Boy: The Video Game	D3Publisher	10/09
Bakugan Battle Brawlers	Activision	10/09
Band Hero	Activision	11/09
Ben 10 Alien Force: Vilgax Attacks	D3Publisher	10/09
The Biggest Loser	THQ	10/09
Build-A-Bear Workshop: Friendship Valley	The Game Factory	11/09
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare	Activision	11/09
Calling	Hudson	SPR 10
Chaotic	Activision	11/09
Charm Girls Club: Pajama Party	Electronic Arts	10/09
CSI: Deadly Intent	Ubisoft	10/09
Dance Dance Revolution	Konami	10/09
Def Jam Rapstar	4mm	HOL 09
DJ Hero	Activision	10/09
Dodge Racing: Charger vs. Challenger	Zoo	11/09
Dragon Ball: Revenge of King Piccolo	Namco Bandai	10/09
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter	THQ	10/09
Dreamworks Madagascar Kartz	Activision	10/09
EA Sports Active—Expansion Pack 1	Electronic Arts	HOL 09
Endless Ocean 2	Nintendo	Q1 10
Fast Food Panic	SouthPeak	10/09
FIFA Soccer 10	Electronic Arts	10/09
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: The Crystal Bearers	Square Enix	Q4 09
Flip's Twisted World	Majesco	WIN 09
Food Network: Cook or Be Cooked	Namco Bandai	11/09
Fragile: Farewell Ruins of the Moon	XSEED	1/10
Geon Cube*	UFO	10/09
Gladiator A.D.	TBA	TBA
Grease	505	TBA
The Grinder	TBA	TBA
Guitar Hero Van Halen	Activision	12/09
Harvest Moon: Animal Parade	Natsume	10/09
Hasbro Family Game Night 2	Electronic Arts	10/09
Hot Wheels: Battle Force 5	Activision	11/09
iCarly	Activision	10/09
Jakers! Let's Explore	Graffiti	Q3 09
Jambo! Safari Animal Rescue	Sega	WIN 09
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	Ubisoft	11/09
Jillian Michaels' Fitness Ultimatum 2010	Majesco	FALL 09
Just Dance	Ubisoft	HOL 09
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	11/09
The Legend of Zelda*	Nintendo	TBA
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	LucasArts	11/09
LEGO Rock Band	Warner Bros.	11/09
Line Attack Heroes	Nintendo	TBA
Littlest Pet Shop Friends	Electronic Arts	10/09
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	SPR 10
Lost in Shadow	Hudson	SUM 10
Marvel Super Hero Squad	THQ	10/09
Metroid: Other M	Nintendo	2010
Monado: Beginning of the World	Nintendo	TBA
Monkey Ball: Step & Roll	Sega	SPR 10
Monster 4x4: Stunt Racer	Ubisoft	FALL 09
Monster Hunter Tri	Capcom	Q1 10
Mr. T	TBA	TBA
My Baby 2	SouthPeak	11/09
Naruto Shippuden: Clash of Ninja Revolution 3	Tomy	11/09
Need for Speed Nitro	Electronic Arts	11/09
Nerf 2: N-Strike Elite	Electronic Arts	10/09
New Super Mario Bros. Wii	Nintendo	HOL 09
No More Heroes: Desperate Struggle	Ubisoft	Q1 10
Our House: Party!	Majesco	10/09
Pizza Boy	Majesco	2009
Planet 51	Sega	11/09
Pop'n Music	Konami	FALL 09
The Princess and the Frog	Disney	11/09
Pro Evolution Soccer 2010	Konami	FALL 09
Pyroblazer	TBA	TBA
Rabbids Go Home	Ubisoft	10/09
Red Steel 2	Ubisoft	Q1 10
Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles	Capcom	11/09
Resident Evil Archives: Resident Evil Zero	Capcom	1/10
Runaway: The Dream of the Turtle	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Sakura Wars: So Long, My Love	NIS America	11/09
Sam & Max Season Two	Atari	2009
The Secret Saturdays: Beasts of the 5th Sun	D3Publisher	10/09
Shaun White Snowboarding: World Stage	Ubisoft	11/09
Shiren the Wanderer	Atlus	Q2 10
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	Konami	10/09
SimAnimals Africa	Electronic Arts	10/09
Sin and Punishment 2	Nintendo	Q1 10
The Sky Crawlers: Innocent Aces	XSEED	HOL 09
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	FALL 09
Sled Shred	SouthPeak	11/09
Smart Kid's Journey to Adventure	UFO	11/09
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	Sega	Q1 10
Span Smasher	Nintendo	TBA
SpongeBob's Truth or Square	THQ	11/09
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	LucasArts	10/09
Super Mario Galaxy 2	Nintendo	2010
Sushi Go Round	SouthPeak	Q4 09
Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars	Capcom	WIN 10
Tetris	Majesco	SPR 10
Tony Hawk: Ride	Activision	10/09
Ultimate Party Challenge	Konami	FALL 09
We Cheer 2	Namco Bandai	11/09
Wii Fit Plus	Nintendo	FALL 09
World of Zoo	THQ	10/09
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010	THQ	11/09
Your Shape	Ubisoft	11/09
NINTENDO DS		
Academy of Champions	Ubisoft	11/09
Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth	Capcom	2/10
All Star Cheer Squad 2	THQ	10/09
Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel	Majesco	HOL 09
Astro Boy: The Video Game	D3Publisher	10/09
Atelier Annie: Alchemists of Sera Island	NIS America	10/09
Bakugan Battle Brawlers	Activision	10/09
Balloon Pop DS	UFO	11/09
Band Hero	Activision	11/09
Barbie 3-Musketeers	Activision	10/09
Ben 10 Alien Force: Vilgax Attacks	D3Publisher	10/09
The Biggest Loser	THQ	10/09
Blood Bowl	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Call of Duty: Modern Warfare: Mobilized	Activision	11/09
Chaotic	Activision	11/09
Charm Girls Club: My Fashion Mall	Electronic Arts	10/09
Charm Girls Club: My Fashion Show	Electronic Arts	10/09
Charm Girls Club: My Perfect Prom	Electronic Arts	10/09
Chocolatier	Zoo	11/09
A Christmas Carol	Disney	11/09
Cooking Mama 3	Majesco	11/09
C.O.P. The Recruit	Ubisoft	10/09
Crime Scene	SouthPeak	12/09

RED TEXT = TITLES ADDED THIS MONTH. *TENTATIVE TITLE NOTE: RELEASE DATES OFTEN CHANGE.

CSI: Deadly Intent	Ubisoft	10/09
The Daring Game for Girls	Majesco	10/09
Dawn of Heroes	Majesco	Q3 09
Deca Sports DS	Hudson	SPR 10
Dementium II	SouthPeak	2/10
Diner Dash: Flo on the Go	Zoo	11/09
Disciples II	Strategy First	TBA
DJ Star	Deep Silver	Q3 09
Dodge Racing: Charger vs. Challenger	Zoo	10/09
Doodle Hex	TBA	TBA
Dragon Ball Z: Attack of the Saiyans	Namco Bandai	11/09
Dragon Quest VI: Realms of Reverie	Square Enix	TBA
Drawn to Life: The Next Chapter	THQ	10/09
Dream Chronicles	Zoo	11/09
Dreamworks Madagascar Kartz	Activision	10/09
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Chain Reaction	Deep Silver	2009
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Critical Mass	Deep Silver	10/09
Duke Nukem Trilogy: Proving Grounds	Deep Silver	2009
Fast Food Panic	SouthPeak	10/09
FIFA Soccer 10	Electronic Arts	10/09
Fighting Fantasy: The Warlock of Firetop Mountain	Aspyr	Q4 09
Glory of Heracles	Nintendo	2010
Golden Sun DS	Nintendo	2010
Grease	505	TBA
Harvest Moon: Sunshine Islands	Natsume	11/09
Hasbro Family Game Night 2	Electronic Arts	10/09
Hot 'n' Cold	Majesco	2009
Hot Wheels: Battle Force 5	Activision	11/09
House M.D.	Legacy	HOL 09
iCarly	Activision	10/09
Infinite Space	Sega	2009
Jambo! Safari Animal Rescue	Sega	11/09
James Patterson Women's Murder Club: Games of Passion	THQ	10/09
Jillian Michaels' Pocket Trainer 2010	Majesco	FALL 09
Jonas	Disney	11/09
Last King of Africa	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
The Legend of Zelda: Spirit Tracks	Nintendo	HOL 09
LEGO Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	LucasArts	11/09
LEGO Rock Band	Warner Bros.	11/09
Littlest Pet Shop: Beach Friends	Electronic Arts	10/09
Littlest Pet Shop: City Friends	Electronic Arts	10/09
Littlest Pet Shop: Country Friends	Electronic Arts	10/09
The Lord of the Rings: Aragorn's Quest	Warner Bros.	SPR 10
Marvel Super Hero Squad	THQ	10/09
Moomin: The Mysterious Howling	Graffiti	Q3 09
Music	SouthPeak	FALL 09
MX vs. ATV Reflex	THQ	Q4 09
My Baby 2	SouthPeak	11/09
Need for Speed Nitro	Electronic Arts	11/09
Our House	Majesco	10/09
Petz Dogz Talent Show	Ubisoft	11/09
Petz Hamsterz Superstarz	Ubisoft	11/09
Petz Nursery	Ubisoft	10/09
Phantasy Star 0	Sega	11/09
Picross 3D	Nintendo	TBA
Pirate Battle	Orbital Media	TBA
Planet 51	Sega	11/09
Pokémon HeartGold	Nintendo	SPR 10
Pokémon SoulSilver	Nintendo	SPR 10
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky	Nintendo	10/09
Prank Your Neighbor	Dreamcatcher	TBA
Press Your Luck 2010	Ubisoft	10/09
The Princess and the Frog	Disney	11/09
Puzzle Chronicles	Konami	11/09
Rabbids Go Home	Ubisoft	HOL 09
Ragnarok Online DS	XSEED	WIN 09
Runaway: The Dream of the Turtle	Focus Home Interactive	TBA
Samantha Swift and the Hidden Roses of Athena	MumboJumbo	10/09
Sands of Destruction	Sega	1/10
Secret Flirts	SouthPeak	12/09
The Secret Saturdays: Beasts of the 5th Sun	D3Publisher	10/09
SimAnimals Africa	Electronic Arts	10/09
Sky Pirates of Neo Terra	Aspyr	FALL 09
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	Sega	Q1 10
Space Invaders Extreme 2	Square Enix	10/09
SpongeBob's Truth or Square	THQ	11/09
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	LucasArts	11/09
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes	LucasArts	10/09
Style Lab: Jewelry Design	Ubisoft	11/09
Style Lab: Makeover	Ubisoft	11/09
Style Savvy	Nintendo	HOL 09
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Arcade Attack	Ubisoft	11/09
Tetris	Majesco	SPR 10
Tinker Bell and the Lost Treasure	Disney	FALL 09
Ultimate Brain Games	Telegames	Q4 09
Ultimate Card Games	Telegames	Q4 09
WarioWare D.I.Y.	Nintendo	TBA
Warlords DS	Strategy First	TBA
Wedding Dash	Zoo	11/09
WireWay	Konami	FALL 09
World of Zoo	THQ	10/09
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010	THQ	11/09

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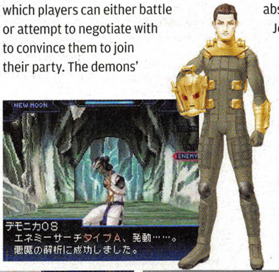
NEWS *from* JAPAN!

A Long, Strange Trip

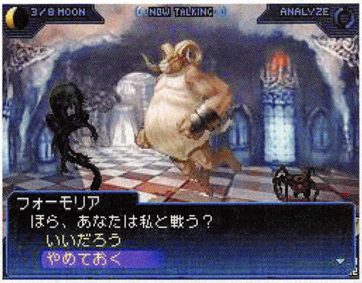
The Shin Megami Tensei series is back with its first mainline installment in five years.

No true Shin Megami Tensei game has ever been released in the West, but its many spin-offs—which include the Persona series and the recent DS title Devil Survivor—have found an eager audience here. Now, after years of focusing on such spin-offs, Atlus of Japan has announced a new entry in the mainline series for the Nintendo DS, titled Shin Megami Tensei: Strange Journey.

Strange Journey puts you in the shoes of a UN team investigating a black hole to hell that has appeared at the South Pole. Like its predecessors, Strange Journey is a dungeon-crawl RPG, and seems to be based on the same engine as the Etrian Odyssey series. It features over 300 demons, which players can either battle or attempt to negotiate with to convince them to join their party. The demons' distinctive designs come straight from the series's legendary artist Kouji Okada, who has returned to Atlus after a five-year absence to produce Strange Journey and handle the character and demon designs. Strange Journey is scheduled for an October release in Japan, and while no North American release has been announced, we'd be shocked to see Atlus's American branch pass this one up. **—CASEY L.**



デモニカOS
エネミーサーチタイプA、発動……。
悪魔の解析に成功しました。



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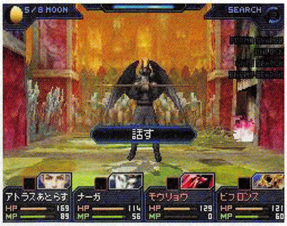
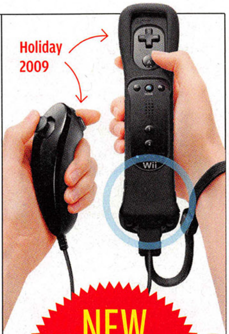
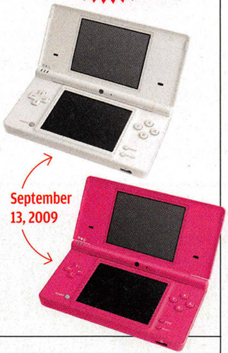




NEW COLORS ALERT

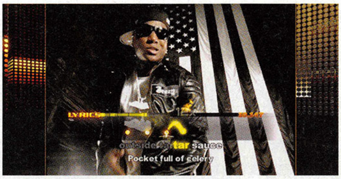


Wild Child

WayForward is keeping busy. In addition to the stunning Shantae: Risky's Revenge (see p. 16) and A Boy and His Blob (see p. 85), the developer is working on a DS adaptation of *Where the Wild Things Are*, based on the book-turned-movie. WB Games is also releasing a Wii version developed by Griptonite. **—CHRIS H.**

Rapper's Delight

Sharpen your rhyming skills with rhythm game **Def Jam Rapstar** for Wii.



The concept of singing along to your favorite songs and getting scored based on your performance isn't new; pretty much all of the big rhythm games on the market (read: Rock Band, Guitar Hero) include that. But those titles have a definite rock-'n'-roll slant. Fortunately for those who prefer hip-hop, there's Def Jam Rapstar. Developed by 4mm Games and Terminal Reality, this karaoke-type game has you rap along to hip-hop hits from the past 30 years. (The final track list has not been locked down yet.) Of course, you can also play the Free Style mode, in which you can rap your own rhymes over prerecorded tracks. Look for Def Jam Rapstar on store shelves this winter. **—JUSTIN C.**

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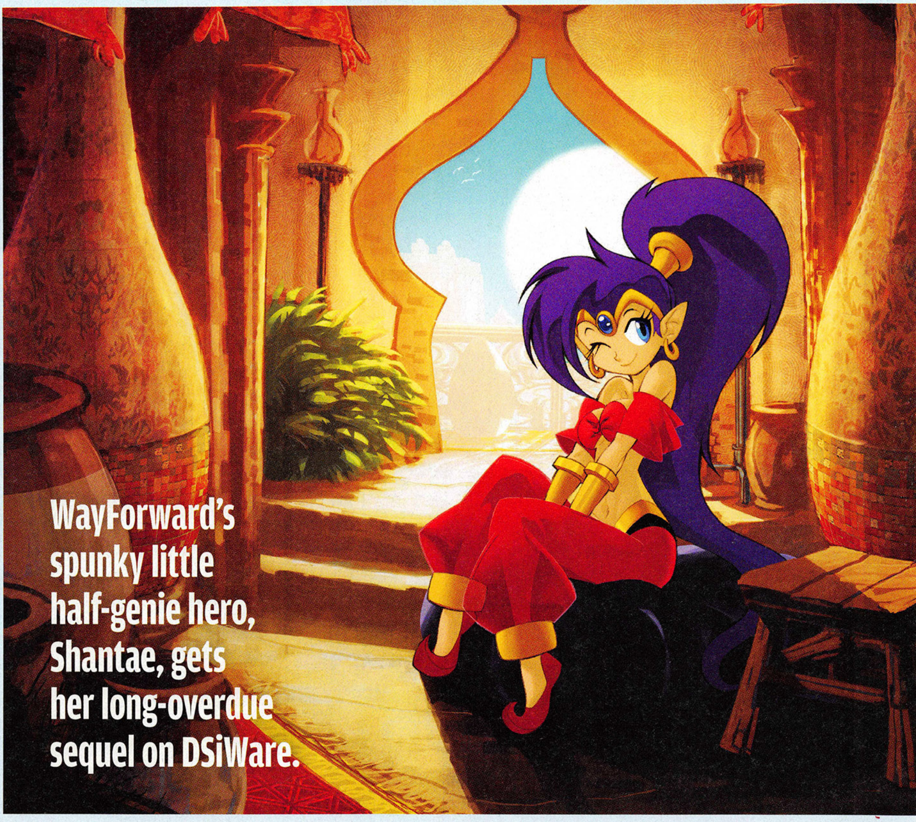
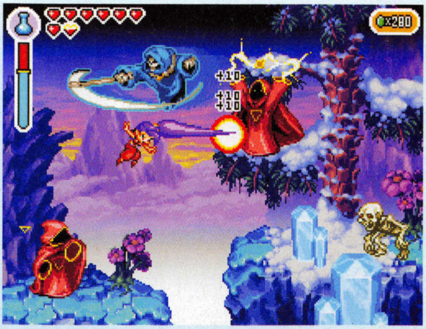


WayForward's spunky little half-genie hero, Shantae, gets her long-overdue sequel on DSiWare.

Your Wish Is Granted

BY PHIL THEOBALD

Now here's a happy coincidence. In our August issue, we interviewed Matt Bozon, the creative director of WayForward, which developed such titles as Contra 4 for the Nintendo DS handheld and Mighty Flip Champs for DSiWare. During the interview we talked a bit about Shantae, WayForward's 2002 Game Boy Color platformer that was published by Capcom. Ever since that game was released, the developer had been working on demos for a possible sequel. "We'd love to bring it to DSiWare," said Bozon, "but right now it's too early to say for sure. Fingers crossed."



Well, everyone can uncross their fingers, because it's official—a new Shantae game is coming to DSiWare. In fact, it's not just one game. WayForward is releasing three episodic sequels to this fan favorite. That should make up for the seven-year wait, no? The first entry, entitled Shantae: Risky's Revenge, is scheduled to launch later this year.

"I couldn't be happier," enthuses Bozon. "Getting to make such a long-awaited sequel says a lot on many levels. First, that something in the game biz changed for the better.... Second, we can finally deliver this game which many WayForward staffers past and present have been working towards since 2002. I'm really glad that WayForward decided to go solo for this one, and I'm especially thankful to our tyrannical overlord Voldi Way for taking the chance both on Risky's Revenge and on the original GBC game."

Bozon credits the DSiWare service for playing an important role in getting the sequel released. Before, developers had to rely on a publisher to take an interest in their game in order to get it on store shelves. Now, thanks to the Nintendo DSi Shop, developers can deliver games directly to players.

When asked about keeping this project secret for so long, Bozon explains, "Some of the fans have been waiting since GBA for the sequel, only to have their hopes raised, then dropped into the bog when we stopped production. So we referred to the [Nintendo] DSi game as 'just another demo' until we were 100 percent sure it would reach completion. We're still in the heat of development, but the end is in sight."

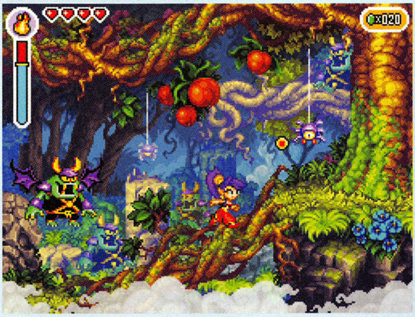
Despite having worked on a potential sequel for the Game Boy Advance (dubbed Shantae 2: Risky Revolution or, more commonly, Shantae Advance), this DSiWare title is all new, built from the ground up to take advantage of the technology the DS has to offer. Fans who were wowed by the graphics of the original game are in for a treat with this new title.

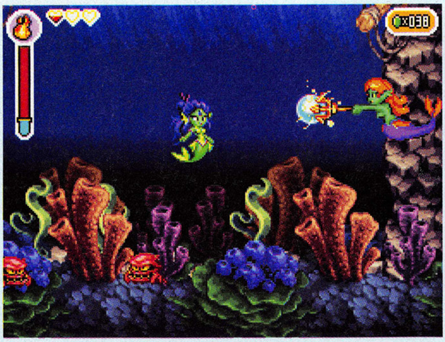
Dreaming of Genie

Of course, if you missed out on Shantae's original adventure (and given its relatively low production run, we can hardly blame you), you're probably wondering what all the hubbub is about.

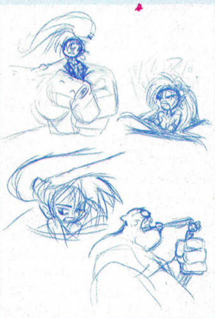
The star is Shantae herself. She's a feisty, young half-genie who lives in the magical realm of Sequin Land. With monsters roaming the countryside, Guardian Genies are recruited to protect the land's many kingdoms. Shantae's duty is to watch over the small fishing village of Scuttle Town. In the GBC game, the normally quiet town was thrown into chaos when the saucy female pirate Risky Boots arrived with her army of steam-powered Tinkerbats. At first Shantae could attack only with her whiplike hair, but she quickly learned a series of belly dances that allowed her to transform into animals, granting her new abilities.

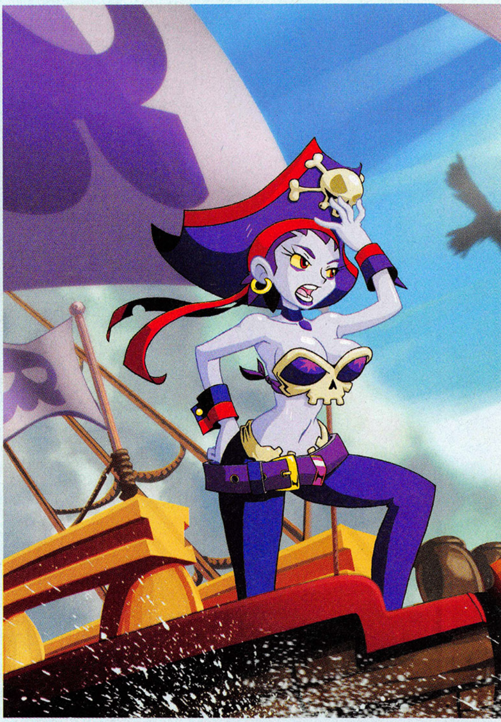
A lot of the original game's





[Above] When the action gets wet, Shantae can turn into a mermaid.





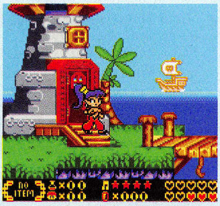
appeal came from its goofy sense of humor, which was exhibited in both the in-game dialogue and the detailed character animation. It's worth noting that the characters have gotten a bit of a redesign, as evidenced by the character art. Shantae's and Risky's new looks reflect their personalities; Shantae is younger and more carefree while Risky is a bit older and more worldly than her high-tempered nemesis.

In Risky's Revenge, it should hardly come as a surprise to learn that Risky Boots has returned to seek vengeance for her defeat in the original game. Bozon did reveal a potential twist, though: "By the end we find that Shantae doesn't always land on her feet." The trilogy's episodic structure should allow for plenty of intrigue; although each of the sequels functions as a separate game, there is a larger story that encompasses the trio. As Bozon puts it, "You could compare them to a TV season premier and a season finale, with one awesome episode in the middle. Though the storyline in Risky's Revenge stops to have its own brand of fun, a lot of it exists to set up pins that episode two and three will knock down. The way the story straddles the line between epic and slapstick is pretty entertaining."

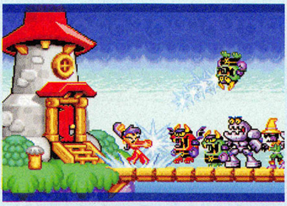
Helping to fill out the new storyline are some returning characters and some fresh faces in Sequin Land. The surprisingly athletic zombie Rottytops returns, and we finally get to meet her brothers that were mentioned in the original game. There will also be a host of new clockwork foes to battle against. We're especially looking forward to challenging the game's bosses, as WayForward has been spending time to make these fights extra-impressive. Pressed to

Home Improvement

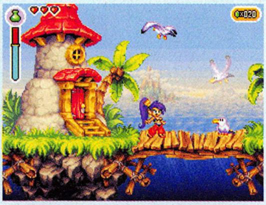
One of the constant images through the various Shantae incarnations is that of our heroine's lighthouse home. What better way to see how the visuals have improved than by looking at this location on a few different machines?



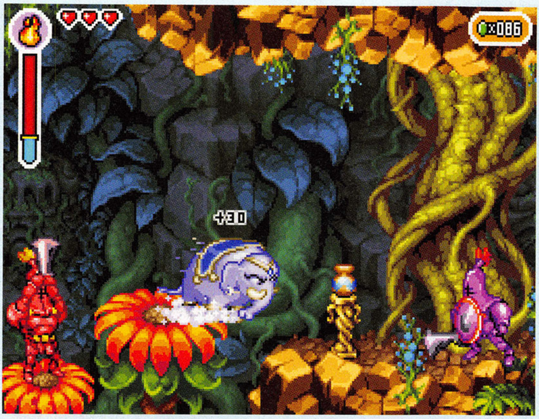
Shantae (Game Boy Color)



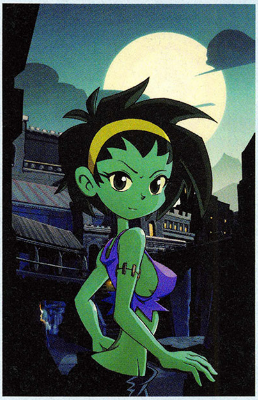
Shantae Advance - unreleased (Game Boy Advance)

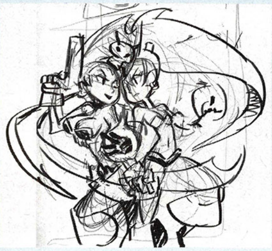


Shantae: Risky's Revenge (DSiWare)



Not even a fearsome knight can stand up to a genie that has taken the form of an elephant.





give us a hint about any new characters that will be showing up, Bozon responded, "Well, you know those Transformers 'combiner' robots, where it's like a Voltron thing? Someone's the feet and legs, someone's the arms and body. And someone forms the head.... We've done something really, *really* funny with that. I don't want to spoil it."

Enchanté, Shantae

Shantae's gameplay harkens back to classic 8- and 16-bit platform titles. Bozon describes it as a "side-scrolling action quest game" that takes its inspiration from such memorable games as Zelda II: The Adventure of Link, Castlevania II: Simon's Quest, and Rygar (all released on the NES) and Super Metroid (originally on the Super NES). "The player's job is to scour the land, battle monsters, and find ways to unlock hidden labyrinths," explains Bozon. "Inside each labyrinth is a series of puzzles, treasures, and at the end an epic boss creature. The hand-pixeled art, fully animated characters, and retro-style challenge are the game's major calling cards."

Those who have played the original Shantae enjoy its retro appeal, but WayForward recognizes that not all aspects of classic games hold up today. In order to refine Risky's Revenge, the development team spent hours watching online videos of fans playing through the original game. The team noted the players' comments—discovering which parts the gamers enjoyed and which parts resulted in boredom or frustration. This helped steer the gameplay away from what Bozon calls "bad retro." Don't expect such hazards as excessive bottomless pits or magic items that disappear once you use them (now they simply drain, allowing them to be refilled). Shantae no longer has limited lives, either, instead relying on save rooms to control your progress. Little tweaks like this will help alleviate some of the unintentional difficulty of the original game.

Risky's Revenge takes place mainly in the areas that surround Scuttle Town, such as the desert, corn fields, caves, enchanted forests, and an underwater mermaid land. Instead of the typical walk-to-the-right

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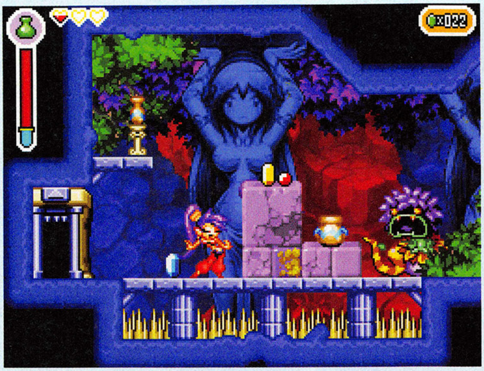
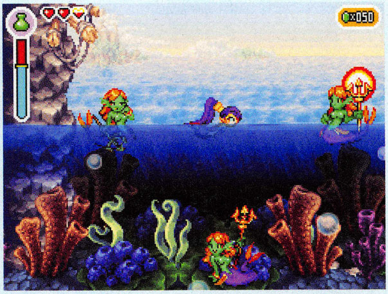
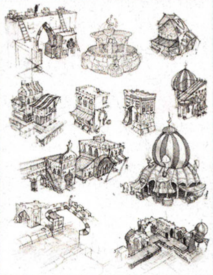
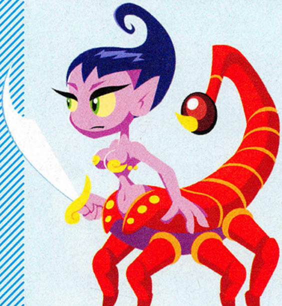
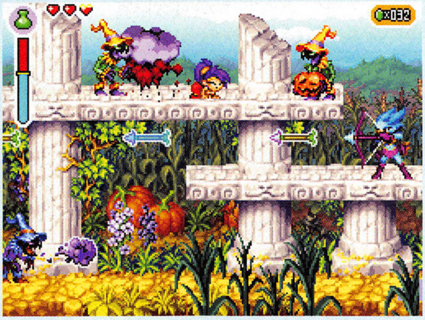




[Left] Hopefully Shantae's dance can calm that monstrous plant.



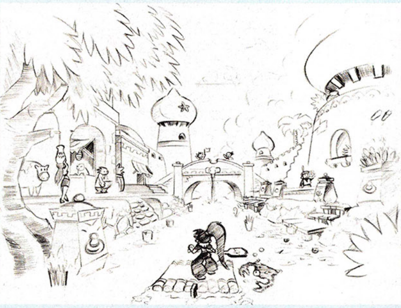




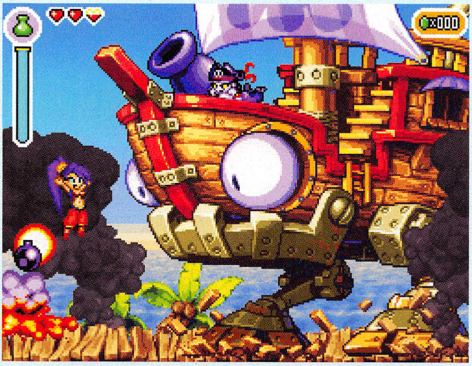
progression, Bozon describes the sequel's environments thusly: "Above ground, we treat everything like an outdoor environment where local monsters prowl and there's no forced path though each location. It's mostly there for exploration, combat, and storytelling. When we head underground into the labyrinths, the game takes on a more routed feeling. There are false walls, platforming challenges, pits, and choreographed ambushes...much more game-y encounters."

To get through these many obstacles, Shantae must take advantage of her aforementioned dance moves. Once again, she will be able to morph into a wall-climbing monkey or a wall-bashing elephant, but she will now be able to change into a mermaid as well (this should certainly help her blend in while visiting mermaid land). Bozon says that there will be ways to combine the transformations, too. Additionally, each of Shantae's forms has a special move that can be upgraded, and magical attacks and defensive moves that can be purchased in exchange for gems. Later sequels will likely contain even more new techniques, such as a whirling pigtail attack. Bozon tells us, "I'm sure players are going to have suggestions for new transformations and attacks, so we'll keep our ears open for how players react."

Since the game is appearing on the Nintendo DSi, it makes use of the system's dual screens. The top screen is dedicated entirely to the gameplay. By directing most of the system's resources to that screen,

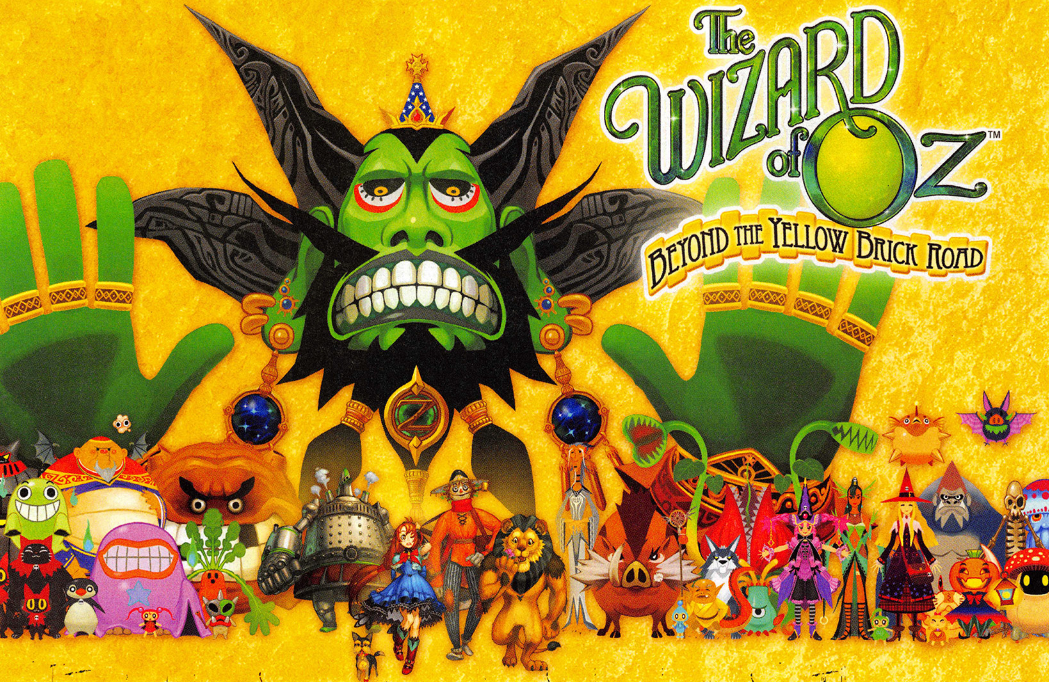


[Right] It looks like Risky Boots went to the Dr. Wily school of giant, robotic boss design. We expect more epic battles like this.



The WIZARD of OZ™

BEYOND THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD



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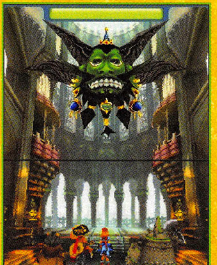
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10
EXIT

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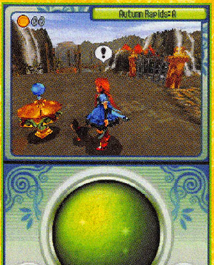
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Autumn Rapids: A
MENU

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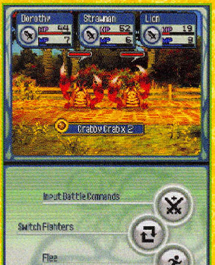
Dorothy
HP 44
MP 7
Strawman
HP 52
MP 6
Lion
HP 19
MP 8
Crabby Crab x 2
Input Battle Commands
Switch Fighters
Flee
Touch button to select command.

Select easy-to-use, one-touch commands to make quick work of battles, or customize controls and seek out hidden bosses for greater challenge.

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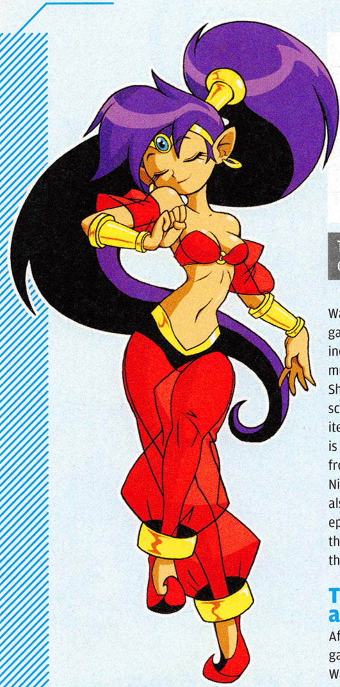
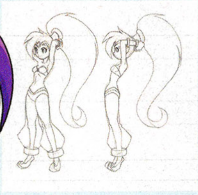
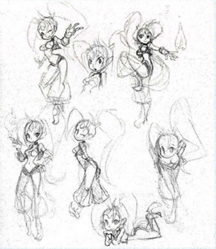
Mild Fantasy Violence





Tons of sketches were used to define the game's new look.



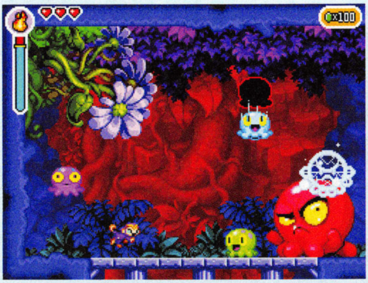
WayForward was able to make the game look much more impressive, including graphical tricks like multiple playfields between which Shantae can jump. The touch screen will be used to manage your items, and the inventory screen is said to take some inspiration from the front-end menus of the Nintendo DSi. Your inventory will also carry over between the three episodes, so those who play all three titles will have more tricks at their disposal.

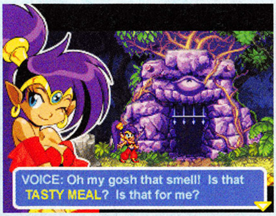
The Tools and the Talent

After completing its first DSiWare game, Mighty Flip Champs, WayForward knew the service was right for a Shantae sequel. The only trouble was finding a way to present the desired epic feel and still have the game fit within the DSiWare parameters. This is what eventually led to the episodic nature of the sequels. Even with that problem solved, there was still ample work to do before anything could be officially announced. As Bozon explains, "Though connected, each [game] is a standalone title. The huge challenge in this is that development was front-loaded. We had to build all of the core systems in advance before we could focus on the first game. It's taking a lot of time, dedication, and planning." Thanks to all that careful planning, the game didn't have to be trimmed down in any way. Both the animation quality and sound are set to impress.

Each of the three episodes will also be a respectable size. Risky's Revenge contains an intro, three chapters, and a conclusion. Bozon uses a classic game analogy to describe its length: "It compares in length to Zelda: A Link to the Past and its quest for three pendants. Once you earn the Master Sword and defeat Agahnim, you get a sort of cliffhanger ending. Call it an abbreviated quest for your 'the chosen one' on-the-go."

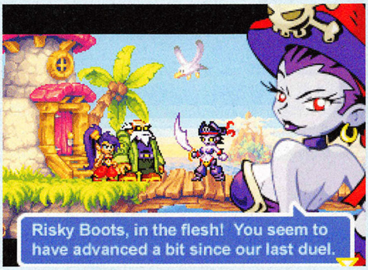
With years of anticipation behind it, we can understand if WayForward is feeling a bit pressured to deliver with this sequel. From what we've seen so far, though, we have confidence that Risky's Revenge and its two follow-ups will do the original game justice. Bozon sums it up nicely: "There's loads of pressure to top the original, because fans aren't going to expect anything less than another 9.0 game. If you look back, Nintendo Power scored Shantae equal to Super Mario Sunshine that month. The players who managed to find a copy loved it, and wrote letters asking for a sequel pretty consistently for the last six years. So yes, it can be nerve-wracking at times. What puts the wind back in my sails is the new Shantae team. It's made up of extremely passionate and skilled individuals, and each time I play a build I'm reminded that Shantae is in capable hands. It's going to set the DSiWare bar very high."



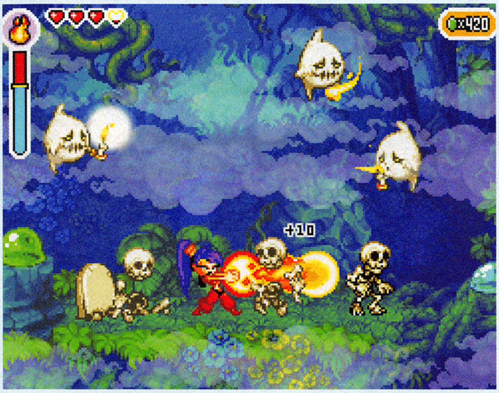


VOICE: Oh my gosh that smell! Is that TASTY MEAL? Is that for me?

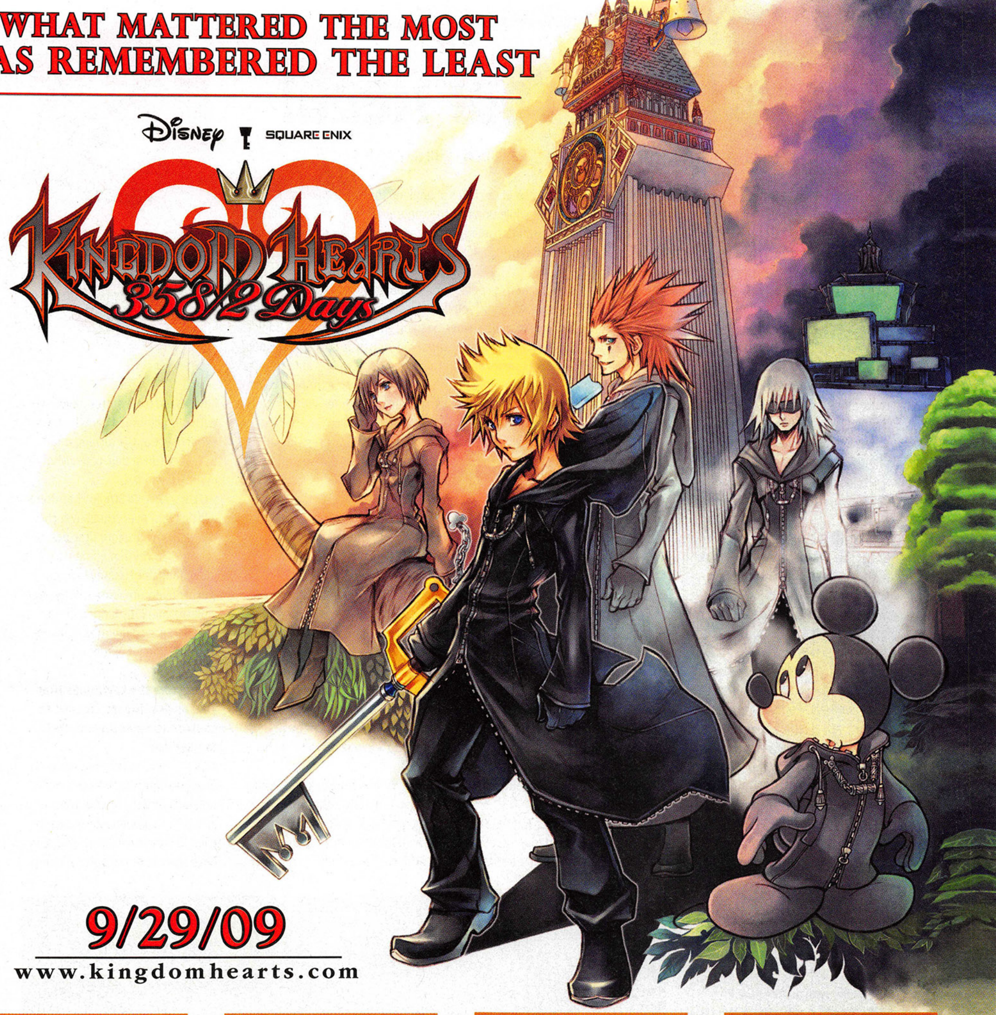
[Below] Risky's updated design makes her look a bit older than Shantae. A bit tougher, too. Shantae is not pleased.



Risky Boots, in the flesh! You seem to have advanced a bit since our last duel.



WHAT MATTERED THE MOST WAS REMEMBERED THE LEAST


Disney
SQUARE ENIX
KINGDOM HEARTS
358/2 Days

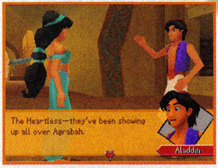
9/29/09

www.kingdomhearts.com

COMMANDS
Attack
Magic
Items
HP

COMMANDS
Attack
Magic
Items
HP

Play alone or with up to 4 friends in the series-first multiplayer mode!


The Heartless—they've been showing up all over Agrabah.

Appearances from familiar Disney characters, such as King Mickey, Aladdin, Tinker Bell, and more!

EVERYONE 10+
E 10+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Fantasy Violence

NINTENDO DS™ Disney SQUARE ENIX

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That's Using Your Head!

Hudson's big-headed caveman, Bonk, makes his long-awaited return—and it's on WiiWare.

Back in the 16-bit days, platforming star Bonk the caveman was one of the icons of gaming; the Super NES had Mario, the Sega Genesis had Sonic, and the TurboGrafx16 had Bonk. But while Bonk's contemporaries continued to flourish, Bonk fell into comparative obscurity, with little more than Virtual Console releases and cell phone games to keep his memory alive. But that's going to change this fall when Hudson brings Bonk back into the spotlight with the aptly named Bonk: Brink of Extinction for WiiWare.

For the most part, Bonk: Brink of Extinction stays true to the hero's roots. Though the graphics have received a major 3-D overhaul, the gameplay retains its traditional 2-D style. As Bonk, you'll run, jump, climb, and swim through three prehistoric worlds (jungle, desert, and volcano) with 10 levels apiece, while bashing goofy enemies with Bonk's gargantuan noggin. You'll also get to take advantage of transformation abilities that aid you on your way: delicious meat temporarily evokes a powered-up state, and by acquiring transformation talismans Bonk will be able to turn into six different forms, each of which grant new abilities (shooting fire, freezing enemies, or ramming through walls, for example) fueled by a supply of primordial ooze. Additionally, a second player can join in at any time—either locally or online—to help Bonk on his quest to stop a deadly meteor from colliding with Earth.

Beyond the primary adventure, Hudson promises that the game will offer loads of extra features, including plentiful collectibles, numerous bonus areas, and three new modes (a second, separate adventure mode and two multiplayer modes) available as downloadable content. To gather more details about Bonk's long-awaited return, we caught up with the folks from publisher Hudson and developer Pi Studios. **—CHRIS H.**

NINTENDO POWER **It's been a long time since we've seen Bonk in an original console game. Why is he finally coming back, and why did it take so long?**

ADRIAN LUDLEY, HUDSON CREATIVE DIRECTOR We have been pushing for a return of Bonk on console for years here at Hudson Entertainment. Bonk is a character we care very deeply about and [we] wanted to do it right.

KENN HOEKSTRA, PI STUDIOS PRODUCER As a character, Bonk has been around for nearly 20 years. He's been gone for a while now, but you know you can't keep a good caveman down! There's a whole new generation of gamers out there who've never experienced a Bonk game and it's time for them to join the fun!

For those who aren't familiar with the old Bonk games, why is this a big deal?

JEREMY STATZ, PI STUDIOS LEAD DESIGNER Bonk is a seminal character from the height of the 16-bit era—one that we think has a lot of fond memories for older players and a lot of fun concepts for new ones. While there's been a lot of rereleases there haven't been many true in-genre new titles for these classic titles, so it'll be exciting to see the response.

What would you consider this game? Is it a sequel? A reimagining? A reboot?

ANDREW PLEMPEL, HUDSON PRODUCER I would much prefer Bonk: Brink of Extinction be known as a revitalization of the franchise. BOE will be a brand-new Bonk adventure rooted in the classic gameplay that fans love but with a group of twists thrown in there to keep the gameplay current.

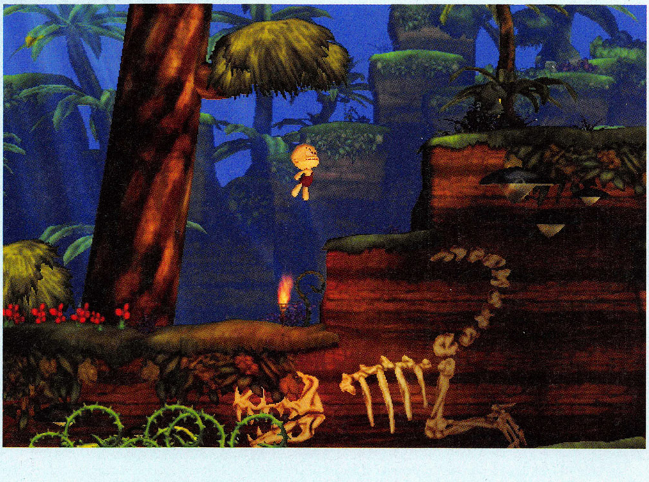
This is a different kind of game than what Pi Studios is known for. How did Pi become involved with the project, and why are they/you a great match for the game?

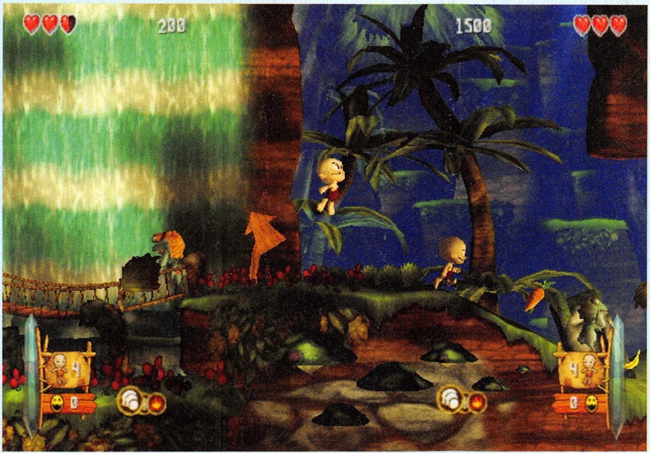
LUDLEY Pi knew Bonk very well and had fantastic enthusiasm to bring him back. Throughout development it has been an excellent relationship and Hudson could not have asked for a better developer. With our combined knowledge and expertise, Bonk is turning out to be a very fun action-platformer for digital download.

HOEKSTRA Pi Studios has done a little bit of everything over the years, from hardcore first-person shooters to rhythm games to [downloadable] games to open-world adventure games. Why not a platformer? It sounded like an interesting and unique challenge... and an awful lot of fun!

What were the key things that you, as developers, needed to capture to make an authentic Bonk game?

STATZ Beyond the core gameplay, the older Bonk games really reveled in their non sequiturs and general goofiness, and we've tried to stay true to that. Enemies have silly costumes and cartoony





animations to go with them, and Bonk himself has a lot of expressiveness. The whole tone of the game is a lot of fun.

What were the things you felt had to be updated for today's gaming audience?

LUDLEY Visuals and animations, improved game mechanics and controls.

STATZ Aside from the 3-D characters and backgrounds, and the addition of Bonk's powers, the controls for Brink of Extinction are a lot smoother than the older titles. We're really happy with how they've developed. The gameplay has turned out fantastic and has been getting better every day.

What does co-op play add to the game, and what challenges does that create from a development standpoint?

PLEMPEL The levels have been designed so that they can be enjoyed on a solo or co-op experience. We have, however, tossed in a few areas of the game that are only accessible when two players are working together.

STATZ Bonk 3 did actually have cooperative play, and we've loosely patterned our co-op implementation after it. Currently the two players collide and can even stand on each other—which is kind of interesting. We're still adjusting our approach there.

Do you see this as being a one-shot kind of game or are you already thinking of sequel/franchise possibilities?

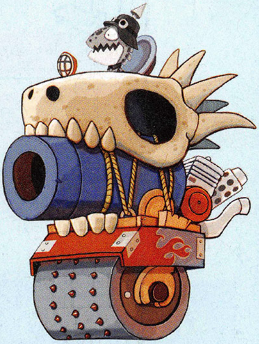
LUDLEY If this game becomes popular then we can seriously look at growing the brand further. The current game is a new adventure where the player may save the planet and Bonk from extinction, so there is a double meaning there. [Grins]

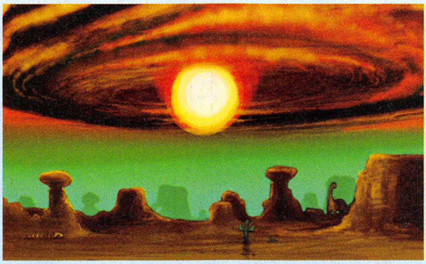
Is this the first time a Bonk revival has been attempted, or are there other revivals that were started but didn't come to fruition for one reason or another?

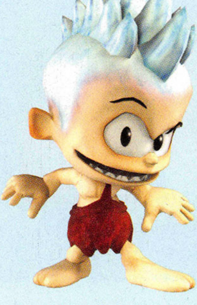
PLEMPEL I can't say if any development was planned at Hudson Japan, but the team at Hudson Entertainment has been championing the return of Bonk for a long time. We've created two previous concepts for Bonk but the timing was off for any real development. Then sometime in 2008 the stars aligned and we were approved for Bonk: Brink of Extinction.

Is there anything else you'd like to say to the players—both the newcomers and the ones who have been waiting for a new Bonk all these years?

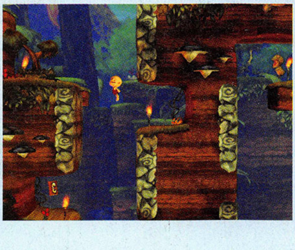
PLEMPEL For the fans, I hope we've exceeded your expectations in Bonk's new adventure. You are what motivates us to do what we do. To any newcomers out there, check out Bonk: Brink of Extinction; you won't be disappointed.

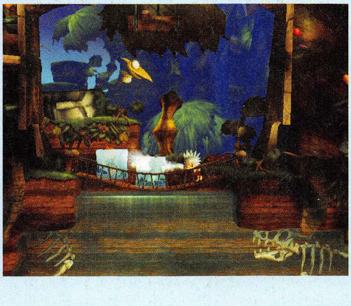


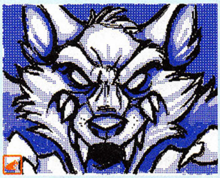


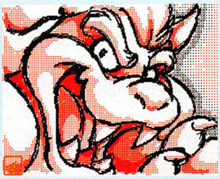


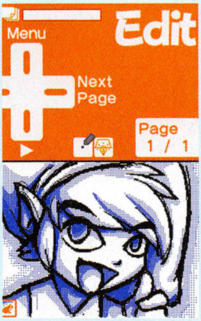
When Bonk assumes his new icy form [left] he's able to freeze enemies solid [right].










Menu
Edit
Next Page
Page 1 / 1

Get Animated

DSiWare draws users in with **Flipnote Studio** and other nongame applications.

Since its launch in April, the Nintendo DSi system has built up a fairly respectable library of games that can be downloaded through the DSiWare service. But in addition to the *games*, we're starting to see more *applications* to download. The Nintendo DSi Browser allows you to surf the Web, and tools like clocks and calculators feature themes based on classic Nintendo titles.

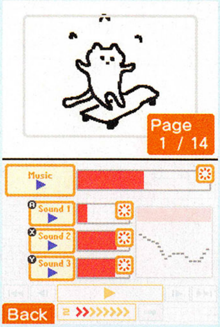
The most impressive productivity tool, however, is the recently released Flipnote Studio. It's an animation program that will bring back fond memories to those who enjoyed Mario Paint on the Super NES. Some people might be initially disappointed that the program lacks a vibrant color palette (you're limited to black, white, red, and blue), but the idea is to create animations that look like doodles come to life. Think of it as a virtual version of the crude flipbooks that you drew in the corners of your notebooks in school.

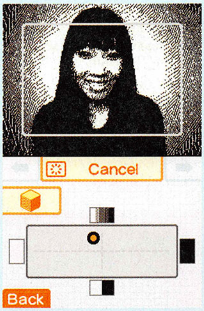
The controls take a little getting used to, but after you've drawn a couple of frames, the animation process becomes much easier. A virtual lightbox allows you to see a faint image of your previous drawing so you can make the needed changes in order to animate it. To make things easier, frames can be copied and modified. Photos from the Nintendo DSi Camera can even be imported into the program and incorporated into your work. Once you've completed your cartoon, the handheld's microphone allows you to record music, voice, and sound effects to play over the animation.

With your masterpiece finished, it's time to share it with the word. Flipnote Studio allows you to go online to the Flipnote Hatena website (flipnote.hatena.com), where you can upload your cartoon for others to see. Likewise, you can view others' works and download them to your Nintendo DSi. If you'd like, you can also save your 'toon as an animated GIF.

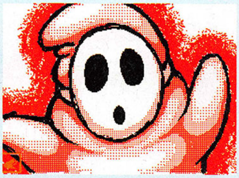
If you have the patience, you can create some outstanding animation with Flipnote Studio. Even if you're not the artistic type, you can have fun making a stick figure dance around. Perhaps the best part of this great package is that it's free. Now you have no excuse—go download it and get those creative juices flowing.

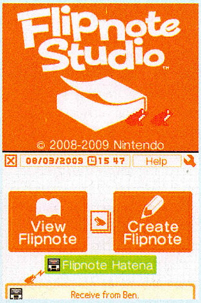
—PHIL T.


Page 1 / 14
Music
Sound 1
Sound 2
Sound 3
Back


Cancel
Back

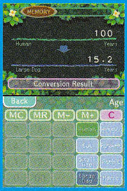
Enhance your animations with photos [above] and sounds [left].




Flipnote Studio
© 2008-2009 Nintendo
08/03/2009 15 47
Help
View Flipnote
Create Flipnote
Flipnote Hatena
Receive from Ben.

KILLER APPS

Looking for some nongaming on the go? Then check out these applications currently available from the Nintendo DSi Shop.



Animal Crossing Calculator
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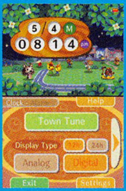
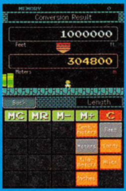
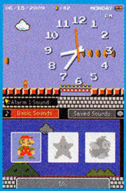


Animal Crossing Clock
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 200



Mario Calculator
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 200



Mario Clock
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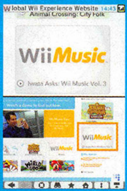
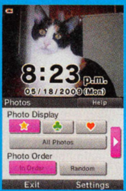


Nintendo DSi Browser
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: FREE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05/18/2009 (Mon)
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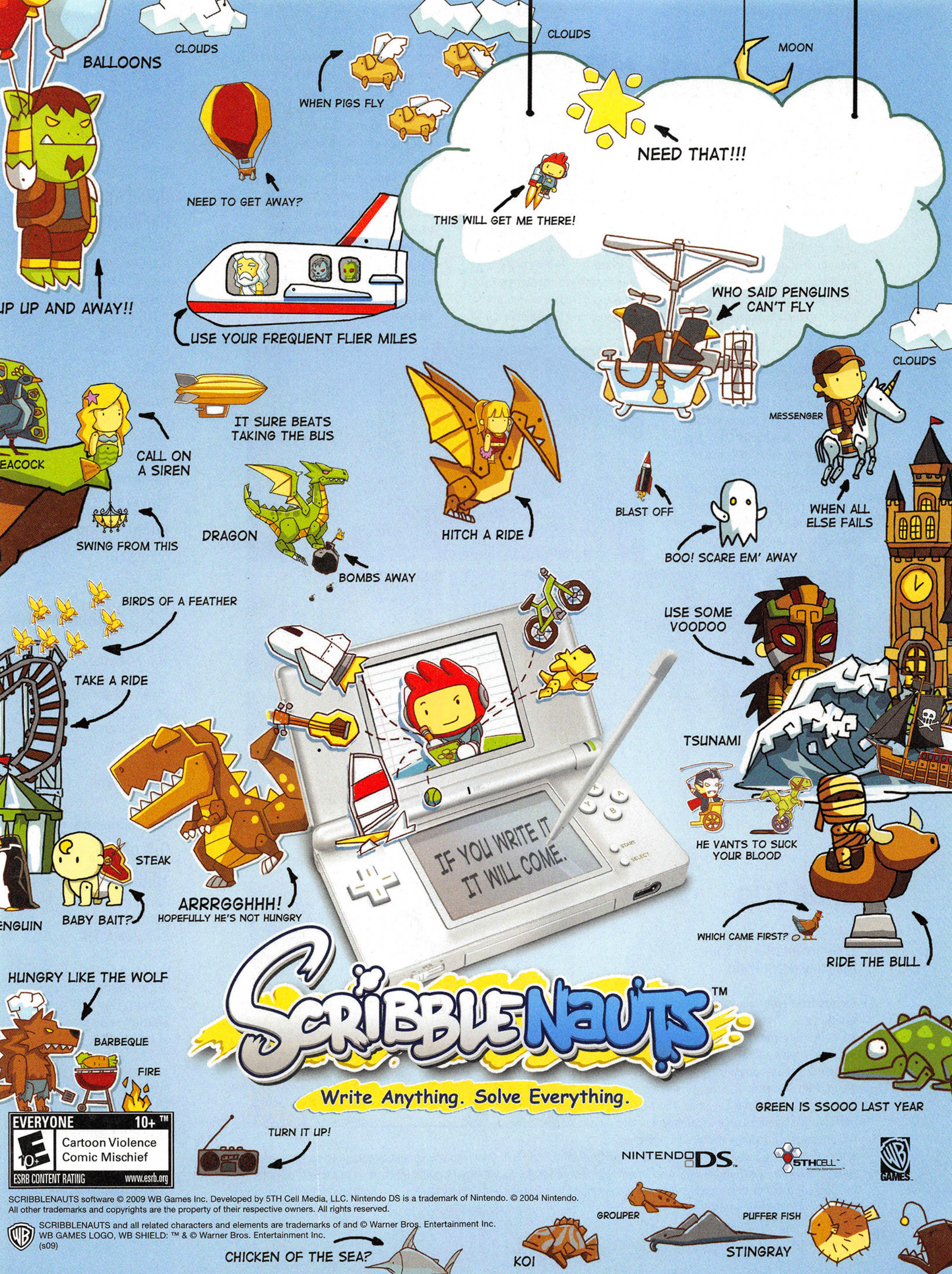
Photo Display
All Photos
Photo Order
In Order
Random
Exit
Settings

Photo Clock
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: 200


BALLOONS
CLOUDS
WHEN PIGS FLY
CLOUDS
MOON
NEED THAT!!!
THIS WILL GET ME THERE!
NEED TO GET AWAY?
UP UP AND AWAY!!
USE YOUR FREQUENT FLIER MILES
WHO SAID PENGUINS CAN'T FLY
CLOUDS
PEACOCK
CALL ON A SIREN
IT SURE BEATS TAKING THE BUS
SWING FROM THIS
DRAGON
BOMBS AWAY
HITCH A RIDE
BLAST OFF
BOO! SCARE EM' AWAY
MESSENGER
WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS
BIRDS OF A FEATHER
TAKE A RIDE
USE SOME VOODOO
TSUNAMI
HE VANTS TO SUCK YOUR BLOOD
STEAK
ARRRGGHHH!
HOPEFULLY HE'S NOT HUNGRY
BABY BAIT?
PENGUIN
IF YOU WRITE IT IT WILL COME.
WHICH CAME FIRST?
RIDE THE BULL
HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF
BARBEQUE
FIRE
SCRIBBLENAUTS™
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GREEN IS SSOOO LAST YEAR
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Comic Mischief
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5TH CELL
WB GAMES
GROUPER
PUFFER FISH
CHICKEN OF THE SEA?
KOI
STINGRAY

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(s09)

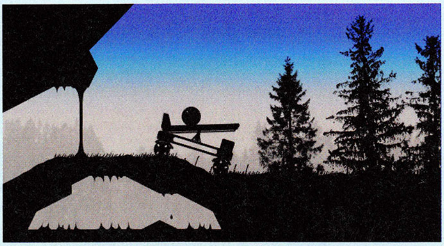
From Dusk till Dawn

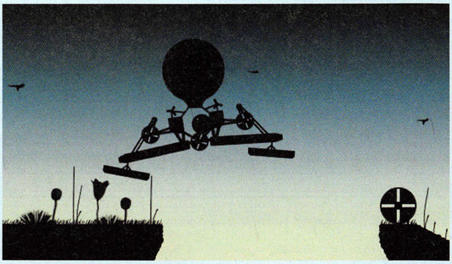
Another promising indie effort rolls onto WiiWare with **NightSky**, an after-hours lesson in the joys of physics.

When this round of consoles is said and done, we'll look back at the advent of downloadable games as one of its greatest contributions to the medium. It's provided small, independent developers a venue for sharing their experimental ideas with a large audience. And it doesn't get much more experimental than Nicalis's NightSky.

Stripped to its simplest form, the title is about rolling a ball from one end of a level to the other. But the execution of that task is, of course, considerably more complex. Your path is littered with obstacles, and to overcome them, you'll need to exploit the laws of physics. That could be as basic as knocking down a plank to create a bridge, but the game's headier moments involve all sorts of contraptions, from skateboards to windmills to pendulums. At certain points, you can also alter physics in one of three ways: by boosting the ball's speed, by increasing friction (making it easier to stick to surfaces), or by inverting gravity. Some levels have interactive objects that you can trigger, as well, such as cannons or pinball flippers. It all makes for a wonderfully devilish set of challenges, and you often have to figure out how these disparate elements will affect each other before you make your first move.

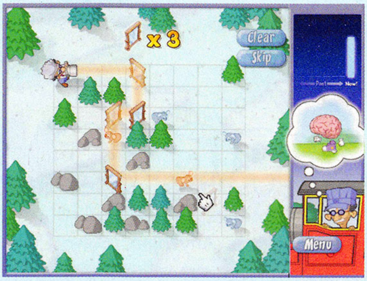
NightSky is equally engaging from an aesthetic standpoint, creating a unique ambience with silhouettes outlined against the various hues of nightfall. Our preview build was eerily silent, but the final product will feature a soundtrack from avant-garde composer Chris Schlarb. If it's as interesting as the rest of the game, this could be one of WiiWare's most successful experiments. —**STEVE T.**





Mind Trip

Take a brain-bending WiiWare journey in **The Amazing Brain Train**.



Games that test your mental mettle are everywhere these days, but only The Amazing Brain Train literally puts the *train* in *brain training*. Previously released for Mac and PC, The Amazing Brain Train stands apart from other games in the genre with a cartoony story-driven quest that hooks its 15 minigames together. The better you perform in challenges such as Sunbeam Savior (in which you must arrange mirrors to reflect light), Critter Crammer (in which you fit animals onto a grid), and Brain Ball (in which you complete equations to score home runs), the further you'll move your mental-energy-powered train. As you travel, you'll meet new characters, complete missions, and unlock new areas to venture to. Developed by NinjaBee and Grubby Games, The Amazing Brain Train is on track for a fall release. —**CHRIS H.**

Byte-Sized NEWS

Unearthing the Worm

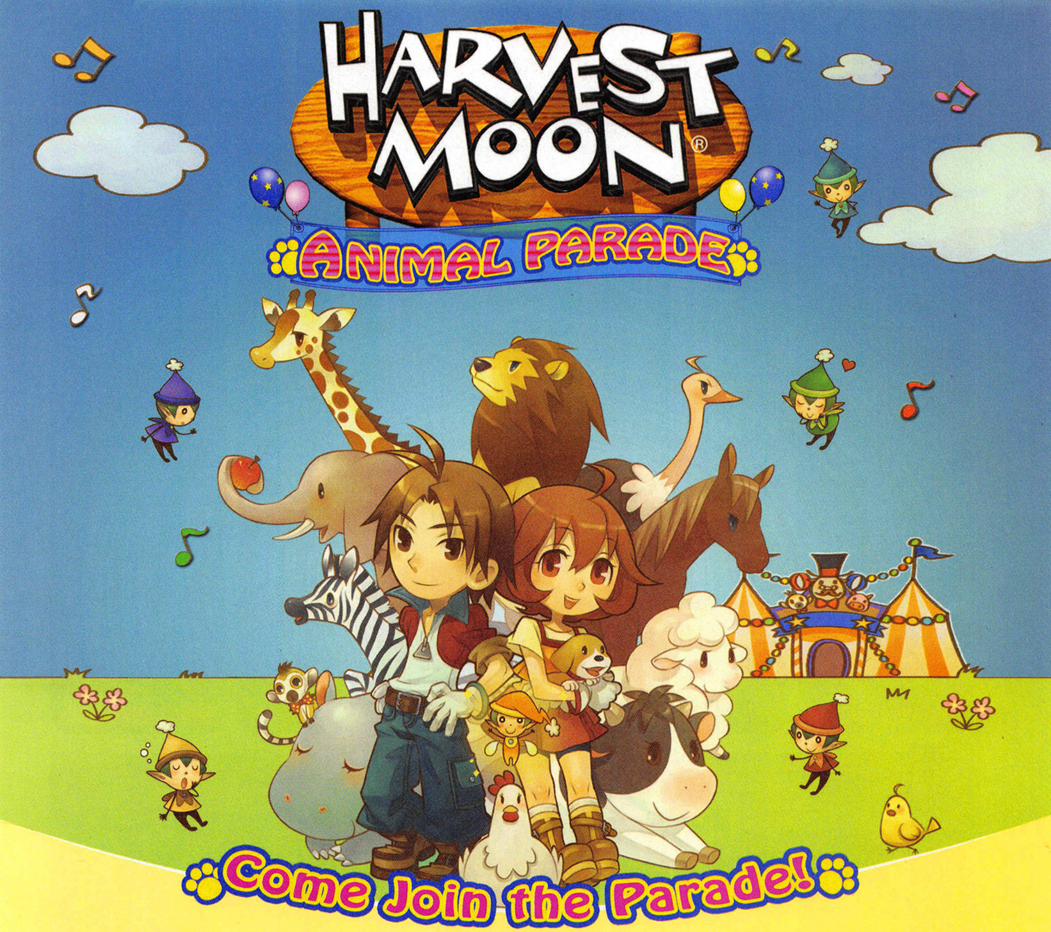
Gameloft has acquired the rights to **Earthworm Jim** and will be bringing the annelid to WiiWare. The game will be a remake of Earthworm Jim's original adventure.

The Fur Keeps Flying

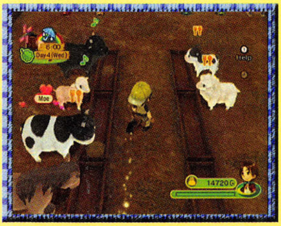
Gamelion Studios, developer of WiiWare platformer Furry Legends (see Vol. 244), has announced that they're working on a prequel for DSiWare. Look for **Furry Legends: Beginnings** in 2010.

Out of the Shadows

GameArts is putting the finishing touches on a colorful WiiWare game titled **Shadow Walker: Boy of Shadow, Fairy of Light**—the studio's first original property in years. The developer recently commented that it's hoping for a worldwide simultaneous release this fall.


HARVEST MOON®
ANIMAL PARADE
Come Join the Parade!

There's trouble in Harmonica Town! Crops aren't growing, the wind isn't blowing, and the five elemental bells are missing. Only the power of the Harvest King can revive the land, but he's nowhere to be found. Can you find the five bells, awaken the Harvest King, and save the town?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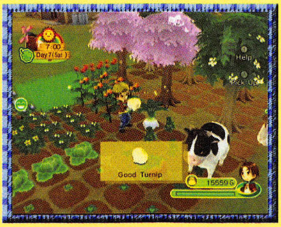
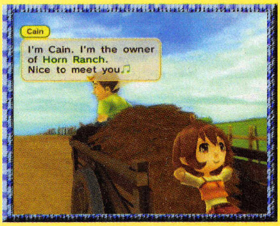
Day4(Wed)
Help
Moe
14720G


7:00
Day7(Sat)
Help
Pick Up
Good Turnip
15559G


Cain

I'm Cain. I'm the owner of Horn Ranch. Nice to meet you♪

EVERYONE
E
Alcohol Reference
ESRB CONTENT RATING www.esrb.org

Wii

NATSUME®
Serious Fun®

www.natsume.com

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EVALUATION STATION

WIIWARE
VIRTUAL CONSOLE
DSIWARE

WIIWARE

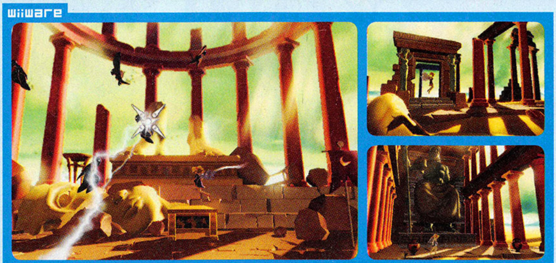
FAMILY SLOT CAR RACING

PUBLISHER: **AKSYS GAMES**
GENRE: **RACING**
Wii POINTS: **500**

If you've ever thought that racing games were too complex because of that pesky steering thing, this game might be for you. Then again, maybe not. Family Slot Car Racing is ridiculously simple; all you do is hold down the accelerator and slow down at clearly marked turns. You can win some of the early races without even looking at the screen. There are several cars and tracks, but this game is so basic there's almost no fun to be had. —**CHRIS H.**

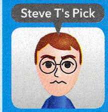
Grumble Grumble

WIIWARE



NYXQUEST: KINDRED SPIRITS

PUBLISHER: **OVER THE TOP GAMES** · GENRE: **PLATFORMER** · Wii POINTS: **1,000**



That name change is truly unfortunate (NyxQuest sounds like some lame Nickelodeon show), but don't let it turn you away from the game formerly known as Icarian. This is a side-scrolling gem that deftly combines skillful platforming with clever environmental puzzles, while sun-drenched vistas and a gentle soundtrack lend the quest a tranquil beauty. To keep things fresh throughout, our titular heroine is regularly bestowed with new powers that utilize the Wii Remote in simple yet highly effective ways; dragging stone slabs, for instance, or snagging fireballs and redirecting them at foes. Exercising these abilities while maneuvering Nyx with the analog stick can feel a bit like patting your head and rubbing your belly at times, but the difficulty is dialed in just right to avoid frustration while still providing a sense of accomplishment. The only significant shortcoming of this otherwise wonderful journey is that it ends with a bit of a whimper.

Recommended

WIIWARE

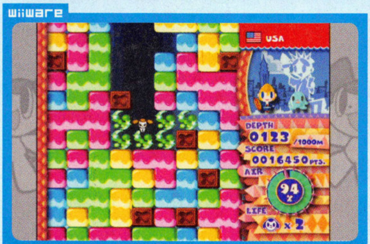
OVERTURN

PUBLISHER: **STUDIO ZAN**
GENRE: **FIGHTING**
Wii POINTS: **800**

Like Sega's Virtual On series, Overturn is an arena fighting game in which combat is waged with robots. Most of the game's strategy comes from customizing your mech with the proper weapons. The customization options are limited to your weapons and mech color, however, so the single-player mode is a bit dry. The online multiplayer (for two to four players) adds some replay value, though. —**PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

WIIWARE



MR. DRILLER W

PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI** · GENRE: **ACTION** · Wii POINTS: **800**

Here's the gist of Mr. Driller W: you drill farther and farther down a block-laden well, avoiding falling blocks (which result when you undermine the blocks above you) and nabbing oxygen pick-ups to maintain your air supply. Strategy comes from the fact that blocks of the same color attach to one another and can disappear if groups of four or more blocks are created. This WiiWare title is fun for a while; however, it's a little short-lived, as there are only nine stages (including the tutorial stage and two endless stages) and no multiplayer whatsoever. Yes, you can play at harder difficulty levels, but there should be more to it than that. —**JUSTIN C.**

Hmmm...

WIIWARE

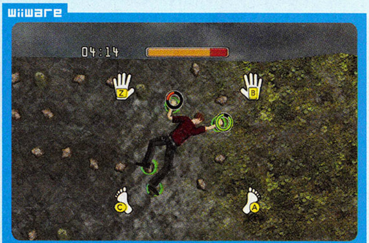
PICTUREBOOK GAMES: POP-UP PURSUIT

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **BOARD GAME**
Wii POINTS: **800**

Mario doesn't appear in Pop-Up Pursuit, but Mario Party and Paper Mario seem to be inspirations. Instead of playing minigames, however, you play cards to advance your character or keep others from moving forward. The field of four is filled out by AI-run characters, making for downtime if you're going solo. There's potential for fun rivalries, but the outcome is based more on luck than on strategy. —**GEORGE S.**

Hmmm...

WIIWARE

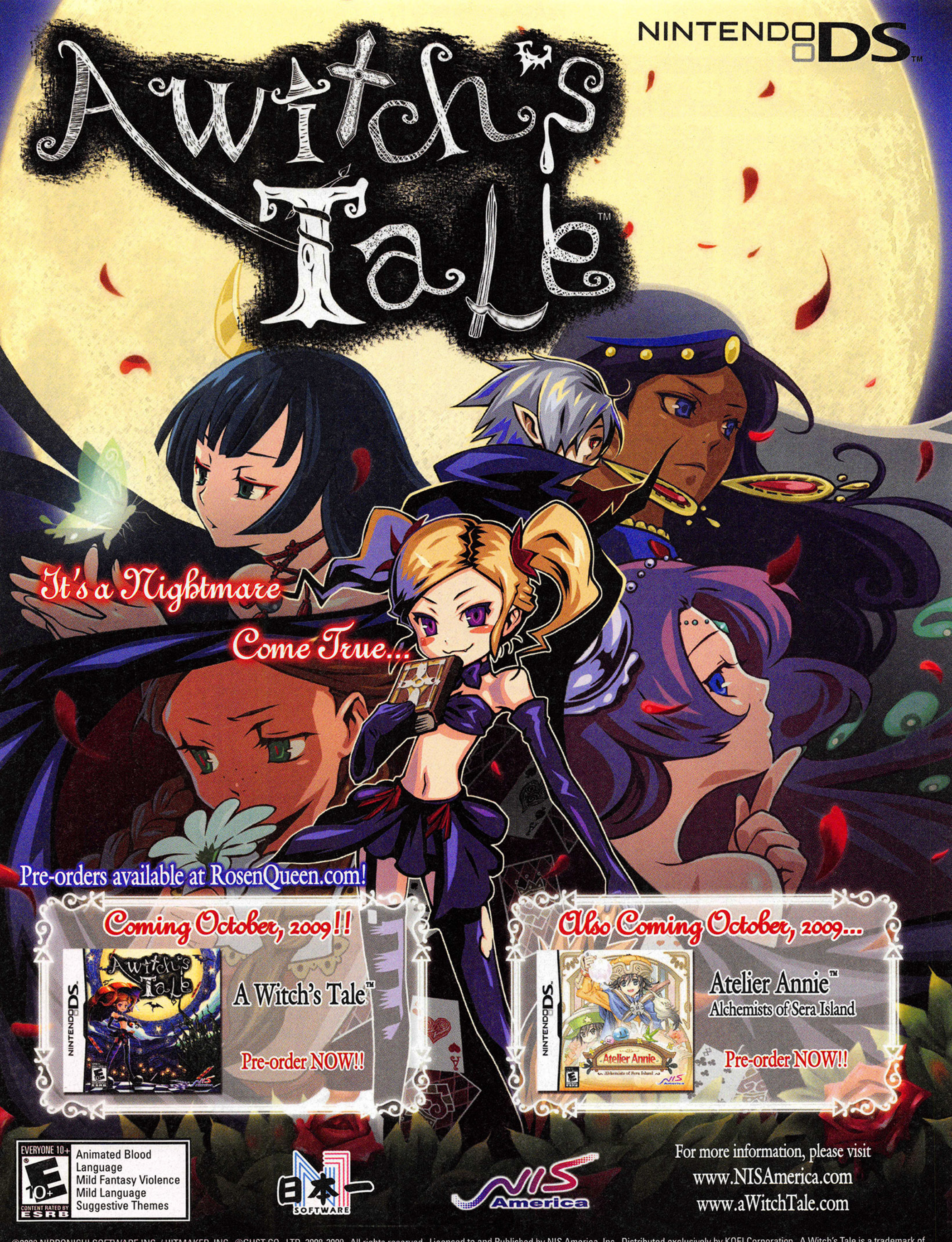


ROCK N' ROLL CLIMBER

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** · GENRE: **SPORTS** · Wii POINTS: **800**

Judging by the title, you might believe that this is some sort of music game. However, the emphasis is much less on the "n' Roll" and more on the "Rock" and "Climber." Yes, this is a rock-climbing sim, and like the actual sport, it's very methodical and a bit slow, but very rewarding once you get into it. The controls can be confusing at first, as they require very precise movements and properly timed button presses for each arm and leg. The Wii Balance Board can be used to control your feet if you desire a more strenuous workout (and don't mind looking a bit foolish). Expect to plummet into a painful-looking heap the first time you play, but after a bit of practice, scaling the increasingly difficult walls is great fun. The game is not action-packed, but it provides a good challenge. —**PHIL T.**

Recommended



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EVALUATION STATION

WIIWARE

Pot: $100
Fold
Bet
Check

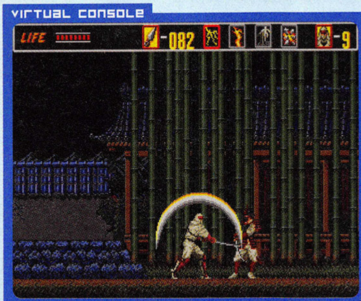
SEXY POKER

PUBLISHER: **GAMELOFT**
GENRE: **CARD GAME**
Wii POINTS: **500**

It's pretty much impossible to find anything redeemable in Sexy Poker. The M-rated title gives you the dubious opportunity to play poker or blackjack with scantily clad manga-style cartoon women. As if the ridiculously lame prurience didn't shame this title enough, the actual poker aspects are so fundamentally flawed it's embarrassing. If you do accidentally purchase Sexy Poker, you'll be comforted to know that you'll be able to whip through it in under half an hour. —**CHRIS SH.**

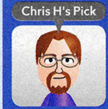
Grumble Grumble

VIRTUAL CONSOLE



THE REVENGE OF SHINOBI

PLATFORM: **SEGA GENESIS** · PUBLISHER: **SEGA** · GENRE: **ACTION** · ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1989**



As alluded to in last month's Sega Genesis retrospective, The Revenge of Shinobi is one of the all-time greats of the 16-bit era. The main play mechanics (throwing shuriken at foes and navigating levels using a tricky double jump) are straightforward but fun, and they're augmented by nifty limited-use ninja magic. But what makes the game especially cool is the creative levels. Until you've battled female ninjas disguised as nuns while dodging cars on a busy freeway, you really haven't lived. The bosses are simply crazy, too, and include baddies inspired by the Terminator, Godzilla, and even Spider-Man (although he's now dressed in pink, not red and blue like in the original Genesis game). Throw in some of the best game music ever produced, and you have a title that all action fans should play.

Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

SUPER EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

PLATFORM: **SUPER NES**
PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS/JVC**
GENRE: **ACTION**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1993**

It's an embarrassment of intergalactic riches on the Virtual Console lately. Super Empire Strikes Back joins it predecessor on the service, and we're glad that it did. Like Super Star Wars, this is a terrific platformer with great graphics, large levels, and a shockingly high difficulty level. New Force powers add an extra level of depth to the experience. The 3-D levels look a bit dated today, but they help break up the action. —**PHIL T.**

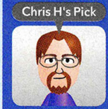
Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

LUKE
x05
SCORE:
00062350
TIME: 365
PLASMA
LAVA BEAST JAWENKO

SUPER STAR WARS

PLATFORM: **SUPER NES** · PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS/JVC** · GENRE: **ACTION** · ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1992**



Licensed titles don't come to Virtual Console often, so I consider the arrival of Super Star Wars to be something of a small miracle. Not only is it one of the best licensed games of the 16-bit era, but it's one of the best *Star Wars* games period. Though it takes a lot of liberties with the story upon which it's based, when it comes to playing through the key moments of arguably the most revolutionary movie in cinematic history, Super Star Wars is hard to beat. Even if you're not a *Star Wars* fan, multiple playable characters, cool weapon power-ups, impressive bosses, great music, and a superb mix of platforming and nonstop action make it well worth playing. The loose controls take some getting used to and the 3-D stages definitely show their age, but this is still an excellent game.

Recommended

VIRTUAL CONSOLE

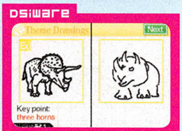
TECMO BOWL

PLATFORM: **ARCADE**
PUBLISHER: **TECMO**
GENRE: **SPORTS**
ORIGINAL RELEASE: **1987**

The original arcade version of Tecmo Bowl is a far cry from its revolutionary NES counterpart. You can't call your plays, there's no differentiation between players, and the whole experience just lacks any real depth. As a result, the game is unlikely to hold your attention for more than a few minutes. To make matters worse, it employs some of the most extreme letterboxing ever to simulate the arcade cabinet's double-wide display. —**STEVE T.**

Grumble Grumble

DSIWARE



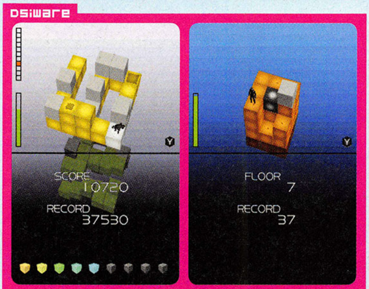
BRAIN AGE EXPRESS: ARTS & LETTERS

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **BRAIN TRAINING**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **800**

Arts & Letters is the second "Express" version of Nintendo's popular Brain Age series that combines aspects of the two retail releases with a smattering of new content. This package features enjoyable brain-teasers, a decent amount of unlockables, and some cute usage of the DSi Camera. Still, if you've already played the full versions, it's not worth the points due to the ample repeated material. —**PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

DSiWare


SCORE
10720
RECORD
37530
FLOOR
7
RECORD
37

ART STYLE: PRECIPICE

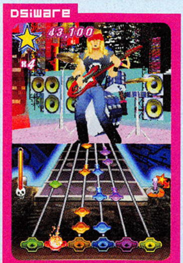
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO** · GENRE: **PUZZLE** · NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Chris I's Pick

Who would have thought pushing, pulling, and ascending cubes, as they fall from above, could be so fun? This is a perfectly distilled set of simple game mechanics designed to create satisfying, tense play. Avoid being crushed, ascend the growing tower—either for maximizing points in Ten Floors mode [above left], or for maximizing height in Tower mode [above right]—and unlock charmingly odd movies of your character in the nonplayable Relax mode. Try, as you play this excellent game, not to see it as an allegory for your life.

Recommended

DSiWare



GUITAR ROCK TOUR

PUBLISHER: **GAMELOFT**
GENRE: **RHYTHM**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

The biggest problem with Guitar Rock Tour is its song selection. Fifteen songs sounds like a lot, but you'll play through them before too long. The stylus-driven guitar controls work fairly well, but drumming, with its three meager button presses, is dull. **–PHIL T.**

Grumble Grumble

DSiWare

Missed 1/5
Save&Quit
Undo
Sudoku
Zoom Out
Erase

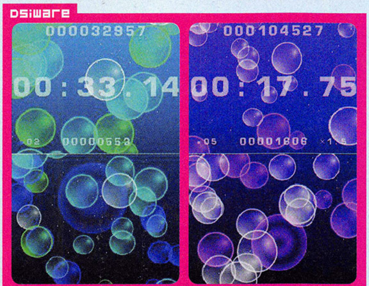
BRAIN AGE EXPRESS: SUDOKU

PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
GENRE: **PUZZLE**
NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

As part of the Brain Age franchise, this bite-sized entry in the series does include a few mental activities other than sudoku, but the popular number-based pastime is the meat of the title. Though the sudoku offered here is competent and there are plenty of puzzles, the presentation is barebones and options are few. If you're looking for a DSiWare sudoku game, download Sudoku Master first. **–CHRIS H.**

Hmmm...

DSiWare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POP+ SOLO

PUBLISHER: **NNOOO** · GENRE: **ACTION** · NINTENDO DSi POINTS: **500**

Pop+ Solo harks back to the classic days of the arcade, when the object of a game was to simply earn the highest possible score. Gaining points in Pop+ requires you to pop bubbles—lots of bubbles. To maximize your score, you're encouraged to form chains by popping like-colored bubbles and "shaking" a bubble to inflate and pop it, causing a chain reaction. There are a few different modes and the occasional boss fight, but the action is almost too simplistic, resulting in boredom after a few rounds. The stylus controls are also a bit too sensitive, registering combo-breaking "misses" even though your aim was true. **–PHIL T.**

Hmmm...

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4 x 4 Grids
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DEMOS

MODS

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Good
Hopeless Romantic
Excitable
Easily Impressed
Evil
Excitable
Family-Oriented
Flirty
Friendly
Frugal
Excitable

Excitable Sims get excited about...pretty much everything. They enjoy an extra dose of self-satisfaction when good things happen for them in life.

PATCHES

EXPAND GAMIN

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THIS MONTH IN PREVIEWS

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Back on Board

> Wii FIT PLUS

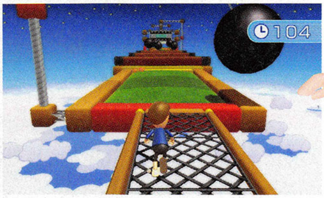
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **NINTENDO** • RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2009**

The original Wii Fit accomplished three things. It provided a gamer-friendly portal to a healthy lifestyle, it lit up the sales charts for more than a year, and it prompted yours truly to appear in the magazine sans pants. I'm pleased to report that Wii Fit Plus will likely replicate only two of those feats.

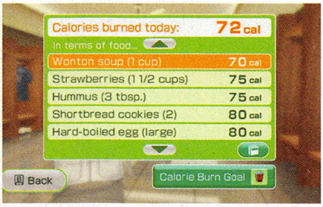
True to its moniker, this follow-up introduces a number of welcome enhancements. The first title's biggest shortcoming was undoubtedly its lack of structure; upon finishing each activity, you simply returned to the main menu. Wii Fit Plus remedies that by allowing you to put together a full routine. You can either customize your own or choose from a number of predetermined workouts that target specialized goals. The game also keeps track of approximately how many calories you've burned, and a handy chart lists the possible food equivalents. (For example, a 12-ounce soda is 140 calories.)

In addition to all of the activities from the previous version, Wii Fit Plus includes six new strength and yoga exercises, as well 15 new balance games. Some of the games are pretty inventive and offer lots of extra variety. In Perfect 10, you'll shake your moneymaker in the name of arithmetic, directing your thrusts at numbered bumpers to rack up the designated sum. Big Top Juggling dresses your Mii like a jester, and tasks you with balancing him on a giant ball while flicking the Wii Remote and Nunchuk controllers to juggle. You'll also have to mix in some skillful dodging when your assistants toss you bombs instead of balls, which seems like a serious OSHA violation. The highlight of the collection is Obstacle Course. It's a bit like putting yourself in Mario's shoes—as you run toward the goal, you have to "jump" across platforms and over rolling logs by quickly squatting and extending your legs. Not all of the new balance games provide much of a workout, but you'll definitely be sweating by the end of this one and have a good time doing it.

You'll be able to pick up Wii Fit Plus as either a standalone disc for $19.99, or—if you don't already have the Wii Balance Board accessory—a game/board bundle for $99.99. If you already own the original Wii Fit, you can import all of your existing data so as not to lose track of your progress. And for those who haven't made much progress in recent weeks (or months), this may be just the ticket for getting you back on that balance board. —STEVE T.

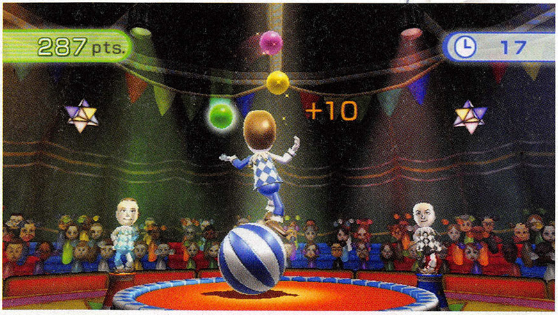


[Above] The Palm Tree is all well and good, but when do we learn Yoga Fire?

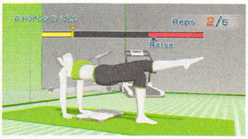

Calories burned today: 72 cal
In terms of food...

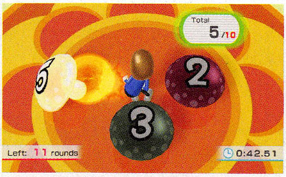
Wonton soup (1 cup)	70 cal
Strawberries (1 1/2 cups)	75 cal
Hummus (3 tbsp.)	75 cal
Shortbread cookies (2)	80 cal
Hard-boiled egg (large)	80 cal

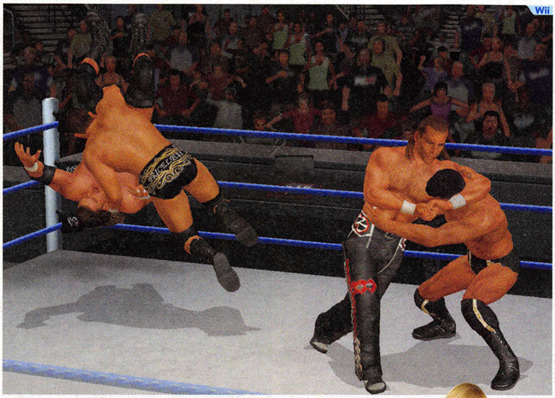
Back
Calorie Burn Goal

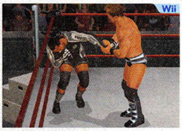


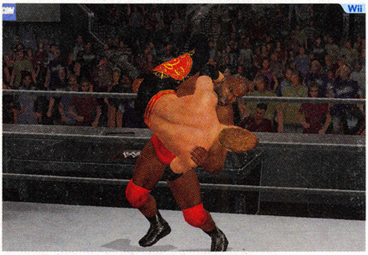
[Right] Rhythm Parade is a lot like Major Minor's Majestic March, only fun.



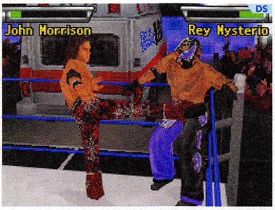


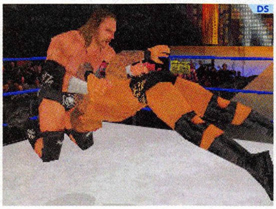






[Above] Sadly, Mr. T is not featured in WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010, but big Ezekiel Jackson is the next-best thing.





It's Gonna be a Slobberknocker

> WWE SMACKDOWN VS. RAW 2010

PLATFORM: **Wii, NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **YUKE'S (Wii), TOSE (DS)**
RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2009**

If you read last issue's feature article on WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010, then you know that the latest in THQ's long-running pro-wrestling series is taking a back-to-basics approach to the gameplay—and that's a good thing. In the Wii console version of the game, there are no outrageous motion controls this time out; the game is best when played with the Classic Controller, but if you're using the Wii Remote and Nunchuk controllers, you move with the Control Stick, strike with the A Button, and grapple with the B Button.

But more important than the altered controls is the wealth of modes and characters in this year's game. Almost everyone in WWE is represented, from megastars like John Cena, Shawn Michaels, Randy Orton, and the Undertaker to relative newcomers like R-Truth, Dolph Ziggler, Ezekiel Jackson, Vladimir Kozlov, and Jack Swagger. Performers who recently returned to WWE—such as Christian, Gail Kim, and Goldust—are included as well. Thanks to the addition of superstar abilities (such as stealing an opponent's finishing move, using the referee as a shield, performing springboard-dive attacks, and executing multiple finishing moves in a row) and an option to change a character's rivals and allies, the roster is more diverse and authentic than ever before.

You'll have plenty of opportunity to put the superstars through their paces, too, as they lock up in match types carried over from last year's installment (ladder matches, table matches, steel-cage matches) and new match types, including mixed tag matches (tag bouts featuring male-female pairs), first-blood matches (win by making your opponent bleed), and inferno matches (win by setting your opponent on fire), just to name a few. The Road to WrestleMania mode—one of the highlights of last year's game—is back as well, featuring storylines for a predominantly new batch of superstars, including a story for custom characters. Of course, if you don't like the story you're put in, you can make your own in the game's Story Creator, which lets you create cut-scenes, make matches, and generally run WWE as you see fit.

Owners of the Nintendo DS handheld aren't being left out, either; the portable version of SmackDown vs. Raw features 30 characters, an RPG-like Story mode, and an exclusive match type: the ambulance match. In this unique contest, you must beat your opponent silly, toss him into an ambulance waiting at ringside, then slam the doors shut by tapping the Y and A Buttons. It's definitely over-the-top crazy, but WWE fans wouldn't have it any other way. —**CHRIS H.**

On the Move

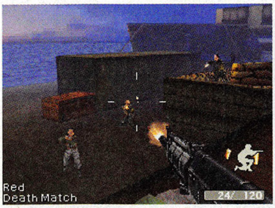
> CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE: MOBILIZED

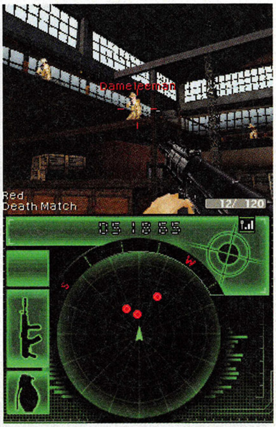
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **N-SPACE** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2009**

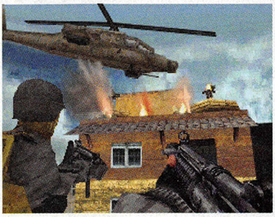
The Call of Duty franchise is massively popular, but the console versions consistently overshadow their portable brethren. It's understandable, but it's a shame, too—since 2007's Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare for Nintendo DS, the games have done an admirable job of replicating the Call of Duty experience on the dual-screened handheld. The latest iteration, Call of Duty: Modern Warfare: Mobilized, follows the trend. In terms of the controls, Mobilized doesn't alter the series's proven formula: you move via the Control Pad, shoot by tapping R or L, and aim and switch weapons with the touch screen. It works rather well, though our hands did cramp up a little bit after long play sessions.

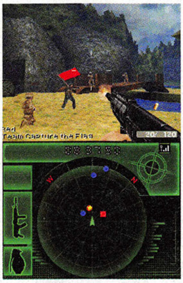
But while the controls are unchanged, developer n-Space has made some tweaks in other areas. Take the enemy AI, for instance—we fought through a factory-type building, using weapons such as an automatic shotgun and a P90 submachine gun, and Activision pointed out that enemies shoot while falling back, looking for cover. And previously, vehicle sections were on rails; now you have full control over a tank as you drive through a devastated Middle Eastern city. The controls are similar to when you're on foot, only you move slower and aren't nearly as maneuverable. At least one of Mobilized's 16 levels is on rails, however: you control only the weapons on an AC-130 gunship as you're flown over a military facility.

Of course, the single-player experience is only half the game; the other half is the Wi-Fi multiplayer. Up to six players can partake in modes such as Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Hunter/Prey (in which everyone hunts for one particular player), and Switch. In the last one, there are green buttons strewn across a map; once one player activates one, the rest of the switches detonate, taking out anyone else nearby. —**JUSTIN C.**

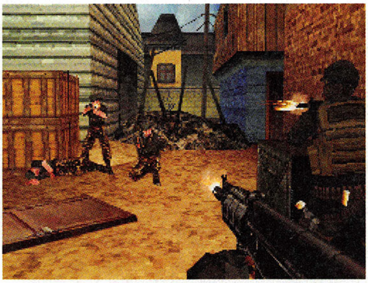




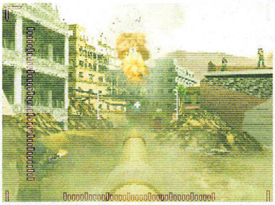


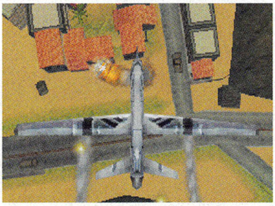


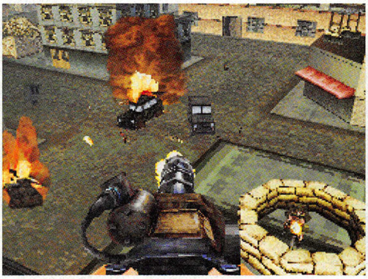
[Below] You can crouch by tapping down on the Control Pad twice. Just make sure you're not crouching if you have to retreat.

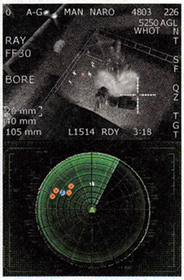


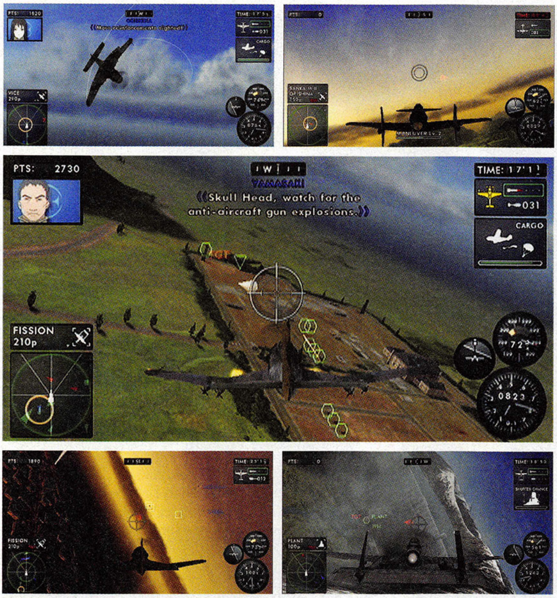
[Below] Tanks may be powerful, but they're not invincible.











Where Eagles Dare

> THE SKY CRAWLERS: INNOCENT ACES

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **XSEED**
DEVELOPER: **PROJECT ACES** • RELEASE: **WINTER 2009**

Based on a popular anime and developed by Namco Bandai's esteemed Ace Combat team, this flight game, which hangs out in a middle ground between sim and arcade, has a lot going for it. You'll fly WWII-era aircrafts in an alternate history that stages battles like football games and thus averts the war. The game features 12 planes to choose from and control schemes that range from easy to crazily complicated; on the expert setting you steer and shoot with the Nunchuk, while you move the Wii Remote up and down to adjust speed. And if you're having trouble getting a plane in your sights, you can charge up an arcadey supermove that instantly puts your fighter right behind an enemy, making him easy pickings. With a campaign promising 20 to 30 hours of play and some anime cut-scenes popping up every so often, Sky Crawlers looks to drop the bomb on the shallow pool of Wii flight games. —**HENRY G.**

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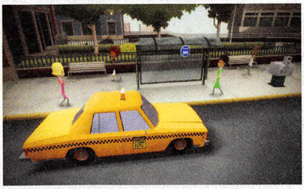
Ladder to Heaven

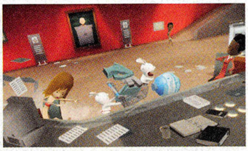
>RABBIDS GO HOME

PLATFORM: **Wii (ALSO ON DS)** • PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **UBISOFT MONTPELLIER**
RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2009**

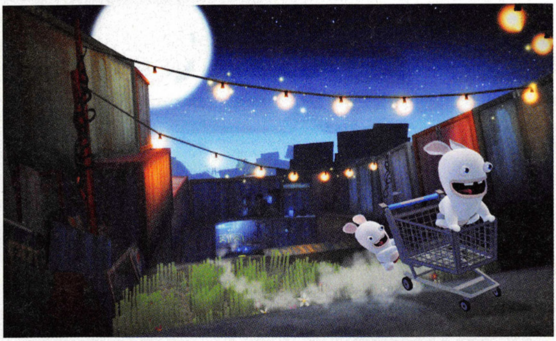
Those rascally Rabbids from Ubisoft's Rayman universe want to go home (or at least what they think is their home, the moon), and they've decided in their infinite wisdom that the best way to do it is to gather as much stuff as possible and create an enormous tower. So you drive a shopping cart, accumulating any and all objects that have a white circle around them. It starts off easily enough; in the opening junkyard level you get acclimated to the controls—use the Control Stick to move around, hold A to increase your speed, and aim at the screen with the Wii Remote and press Z to launch a random Rabbid at stuff. As you approach objects, you automatically grab them. If you want to unload your collected junk midmission, just talk to a Rabbid playing a tuba; he'll take whatever you have off your hands for safekeeping.

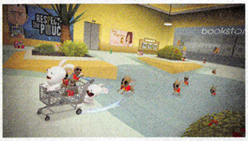
Since this is essentially a tutorial level, there's nothing to worry about. The first actual level—a shopping mall—is a slightly different story. There you have to worry about breaking open objects and obtaining shoppers' clothes (a quick shake of the Wii Remote to unleash a "bwaaaah" attack takes care of both). Reaching some items requires more-advanced platforming skills. In addition to maintaining your balance on some platforms and jumping off ramps, you have to maneuver your way across various conveyer belts, avoiding dangerously hot heaters and spiky cacti along the way. Enemies, too, present a problem; dogs chained to poles try to bite you (simply "bwaaaah" them into submission, then add them to your collection), and massive cleaning robots (think Roombas on steroids) try to vacuum you up. Clearly, it isn't easy being a Rabbid. But it is fun—and pretty darn funny. —**JUSTIN C.**



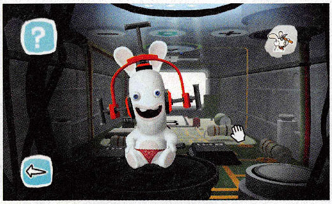


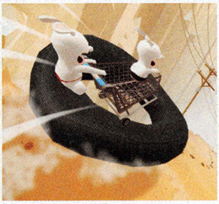
[Above] Pretty much everything is fair game when you're collecting junk.

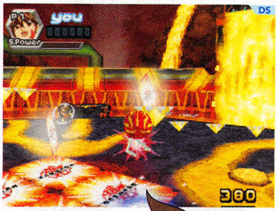


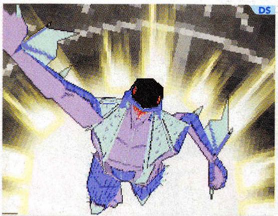


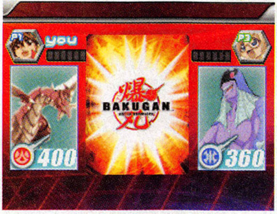
[Below] You may not know it, but there's a Rabbid living in your Wii Remote.

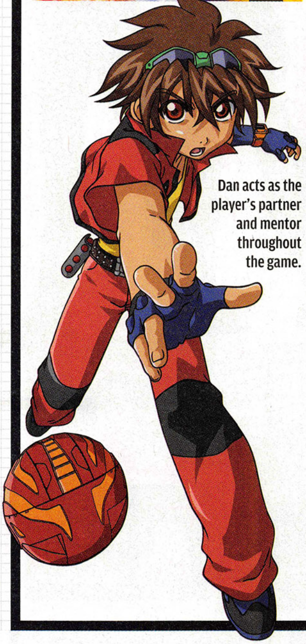




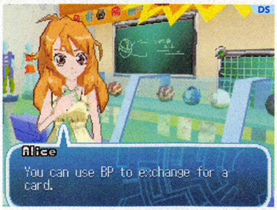






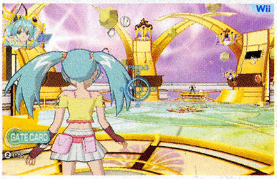


Dan acts as the player's partner and mentor throughout the game.



Alice

You can use BP to exchange for a card.



High Rollers

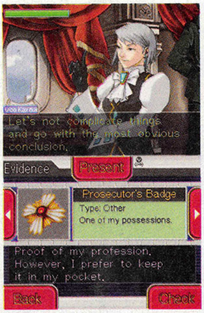
> BAKUGAN BATTLE BRAWLERS

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS (ALSO ON Wii)**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION** • DEVELOPER: **NOW PRODUCTIONS**
RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2009**

In case you're not already a fan of the wildly popular Bakugan card/board/toy game, here are the basics: in two- to four-player matches, you roll Bakugan (balls that explode into giant fight-crazy monsters) around a battlefield until they land on Gate Cards. When an opponent's Bakugan lands on the same card, the two beasts battle. Each Bakugan's G-Power is adjusted based on the details of the Gate Card and any Attribute Cards you decide to play, and whichever Bakugan ends up with the highest total G-Power wins the fight and takes the Gate Card; the first player to collect three Gate Cards wins the match.

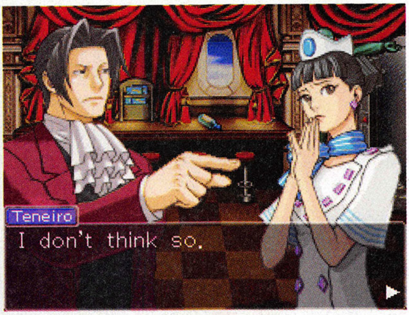
Like the Wii edition of Battle Brawlers that we previewed in Vol. 244, the handheld version adds a few enhancements to the original card game: your Bakugan can level up, you can charge Special Shots, the battlefields are littered with power-ups, and—just as the Wii Battle Brawlers includes quick Wii Remote-controlled minigames that can turn the tide of battle—the DS version has you use the stylus to scratch, tap, or trace gems to gain an advantage. Speaking of stylus controls, a quick flick is used to launch your Bakugan onto the battlefield, and small strokes steer its roll once it lands. To reach pickups, you blow into the microphone to jump.

An original plot, stat tracking, and a shop filled with extra cards and Bakugan round out the story mode, and matches can be played over a local wireless connection with up to three friends. Plus, an exclusive Bakugan toy will be boxed with limited copies of the DS game. —**CHRIS SL.**



Let's not complicate things and go with the most obvious conclusion.

Proof of my profession. However, I prefer to keep it in my pocket.



I don't think so.

Miles to Go

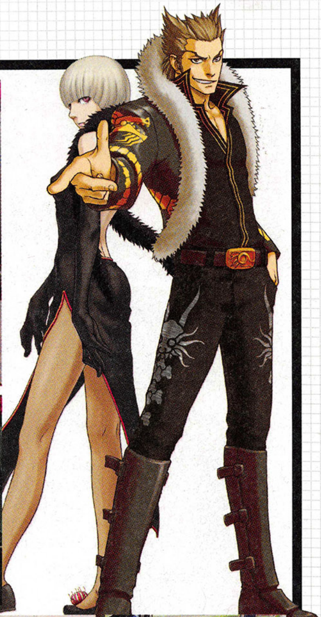
> ACE ATTORNEY INVESTIGATIONS: MILES EDGEWORTH

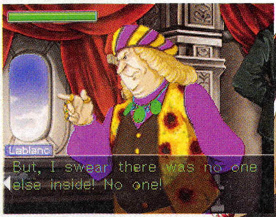
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM** • RELEASE: **FEBRUARY 2010**

After taking a look at an early English version of Ace Attorney Investigations: Miles Edgeworth for last issue's preview, we knew the game would build upon the franchise's formula by adding the ability to freely explore your surroundings and allowing you to reach conclusions by combining pieces of info in the logic menu. We also knew it featured Ace Attorney staples, such as conversing with witnesses, exposing suspects' lies by presenting contradictory evidence, and yelling commands into the DS microphone. But after spending time with a more complete version of the game, we're glad to report that the game also has a surprisingly complex narrative to match its addictive point-and-click gameplay.

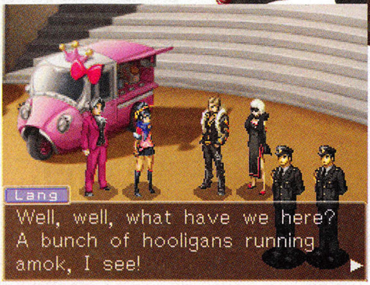
The game begins when prosecutor Miles Edgeworth (Phoenix Wright's friend and rival) returns home after a month abroad only to find that a detective has been killed right in his own office. But that's just the start of the trouble; in subsequent cases, Edgeworth finds himself caught up in complex international smuggling cases, kidnappings, and, of course, more murders. In the course of your investigations, you'll cross paths with numerous interesting characters, such as Kay Faraday (a self-proclaimed thief of truth) and whip-wielding prosecutor Franziska von Karma (Edgeworth's sister figure). You'll also encounter an aggressive Interpol agent named Shi-Long Lang who holds a grudge against prosecutors.

The mysterious events that unfold seem to be controlled by a powerful criminal organization, yet they're also somehow connected to the actions of Kay's predecessor, the great thief Yatagarasu, who once exposed many corrupt dealings in the business world. As for what those connections are, we'll just have to wait and see when the game hits early next year. —**CHRIS H.**

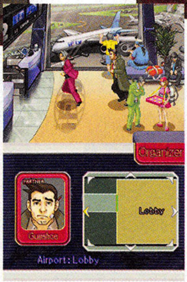


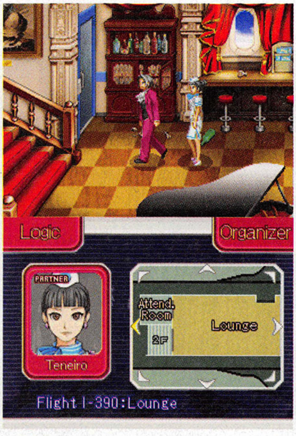


But, I swear there was no one else inside! No one!

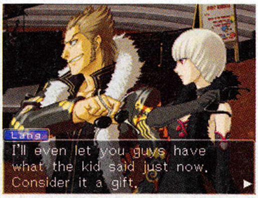


Well, well, what have we here? A bunch of hooligans running amok, I see!

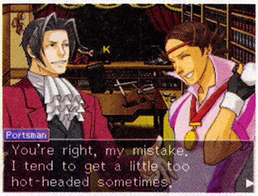




[Below] Interpol agent Shi-Long Lang is what's known in legal circles as a big ol' jerk.



I'll even let you guys have what the kid said just now. Consider it a gift.



You're right, my mistake. I tend to get a little too hot-headed sometimes.

There's no online play, but the game does have pass-the-board offline multiplayer.

STONE YOUR TV

All Aboard

> TONY HAWK: RIDE

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **BUZZ MONKEY** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2009**

Stepping onto Tony Hawk: Ride's skateboard peripheral can seem daunting to those who don't skate (us, for instance), but it works pretty well in practice. You wave your foot past a side sensor to start rolling, lean back and suddenly shift forward to ollie, rotate left or right a bit while performing the ollie motion to do a kick flip, and put a hand over any of the board's four sensors to grab. Armed with this basic arsenal of tricks, we ventured to the Central Park skate park in New York (one of the game's six regions, which also include Southern California and Spain), jumping off ramps and grinding on playground structures. It's not as easy to do zany maneuvers as in the previous Tony Hawk titles, but it feels more rewarding when you nail a trick. This is not to say that Ride is ultrarealistic, of course; certainly the cartoony aesthetics and the Style special move (everything slows down, bullet time-style, when activated) reflect that—not to mention the fact that you can import your Mii, or play as Mii versions of the 15 pro skaters. —JUSTIN C.

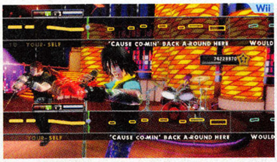
Join the Band

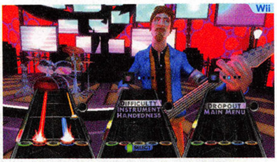
>BAND HERO

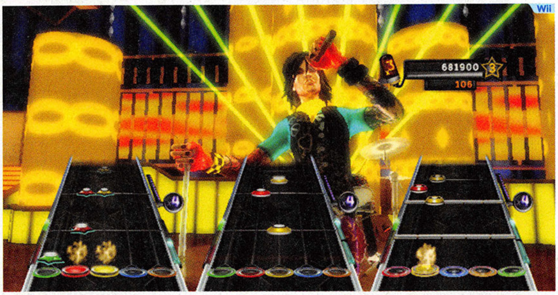
PLATFORM: **Wii, NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **VICARIOUS VISIONS**
RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2009**

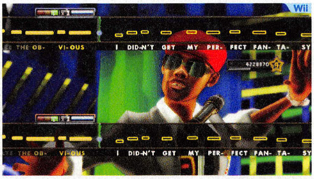
To put it simply, Band Hero for Wii is Guitar Hero 5 with a pop-focused 65-song set list. (That said, you can play your downloaded Guitar Hero 5 songs in Band Hero.) While the Wii game plays as you would expect, the Nintendo DS version is a slightly different experience. Up to four people can play the game's 30 songs via local wireless, singing into the handheld's mic, playing guitar or bass with the Guitar Grip controller (from the Guitar Hero On Tour titles), or drumming with the Drum Grip peripheral. As with any new accessory, the Drum Grip takes some getting used to, but thankfully the learning curve isn't too steep. Plus, you can get out of sticky situations by unleashing a Stage Stunt. Pressing the Stage Stunt icon on the touch screen activates a minigame—such as tapping on members of the audience to give them high fives—which can be used to save a failing bandmate. The Wii and DS versions of the game can connect together, allowing you to transfer the game's 50 Fan Request challenges from Wii to DS so you can play them on the go. **—JUSTIN C.**

PREVIEW
NOVEMBER '09



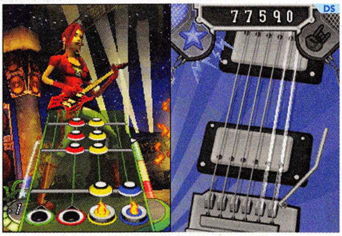


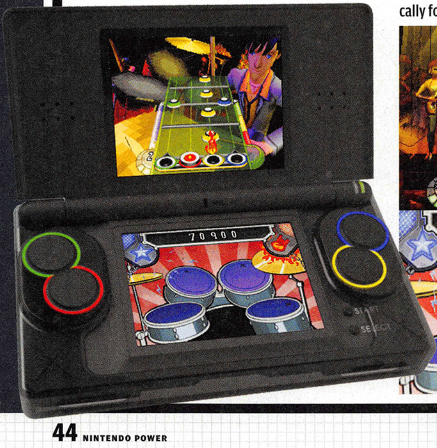




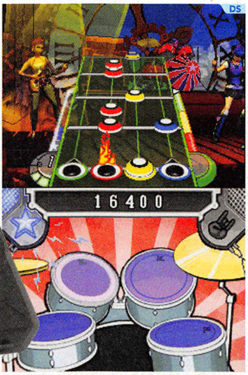
The NINTENDO DS VERSION TRACKS (THUS FAR):

AVRIL LAVIGNE "Girlfriend"
BLINK-182 "First Date"
EVANESCENCE "Call Me When You're Sober"
FALL OUT BOY "Thnks fr th Mmrs"
THE KILLERS "Spaceman"
KT TUNSTALL "Suddenly I See"
NO DOUBT "Excuse Me Mr."
P!NK "So What"
QUEEN "Crazy Little Thing Called Love"
SPIN DOCTORS "Two Princes"



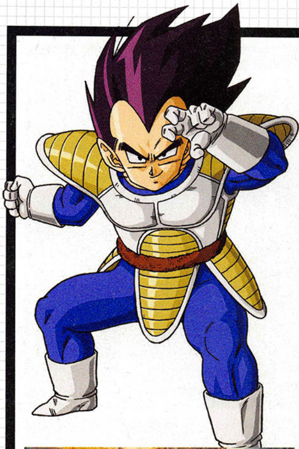


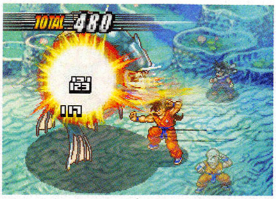
[Left] The Drum Grip is designed specifically for the Nintendo DS Lite.

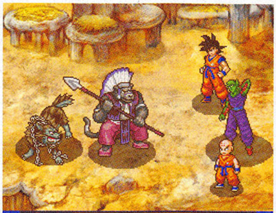


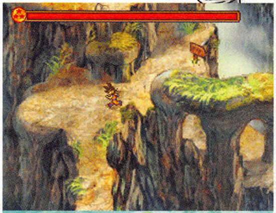
The Wii VERSION TRACKS (THUS FAR):

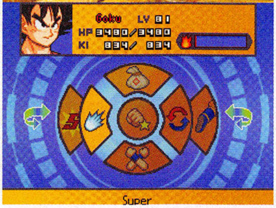
THE ALL-AMERICAN REJECTS "Dirty Little Secret"
ALPHABEAT "Fascination"
ALY AND AJ "Like Whoa"
THE BRAVERY "Believe"
CARL DOUGLAS "Kung Fu Fighting"
CHEAP TRICK "I Want You To Want Me" (Live)
COUNTING CROWS "Angels of the Silences"
DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL "Hands Down"
DON MCLEAN "American Pie"
DURAN DURAN "Rio"
EVANESCENCE "Bring Me to Life"
FALL OUT BOY "Sugar, We're Goin' Down"
HILARY DUFF "So Yesterday"
JACKSON 5 "ABC"
JANET JACKSON "Black Cat"
JESSE MCCARTNEY "Beautiful Soul"
THE KOOKS "Naïve"
LILY ALLEN "Take What You Take"
MAROON 5 "She Will Be Loved"
THE MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES "The Impression That I Get"
NO DOUBT "Just a Girl"
OK GO "A Million Ways"
ROBBIE WILLIAMS AND KYLIE MINOGUE "Kids"
ROY ORBISON "Oh Pretty Woman"
SNOW PATROL "Take Back the City"
STYX "Mr. Roboto"
TAYLOR SWIFT "Love Story"
TAYLOR SWIFT "Picture to Burn"
TAYLOR SWIFT "You Belong With Me"
TONIC "If You Could Only See"
VILLAGE PEOPLE "YMCA"
YELLOWCARD "Ocean Avenue"

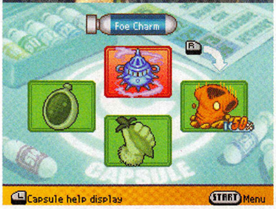


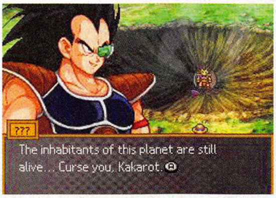












???

The inhabitants of this planet are still alive... Curse you, Kakarot.

The Saiyans Are Coming

>DRAGON BALL Z: ATTACK OF THE SAIYANS

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **NAMCO BANDAI**
DEVELOPER: **MONOLITH SOFT** • RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2009**

Monolith Soft has a sense of humor. We wouldn't have believed it a few years ago, but the same company that made Xenosaga has a knack for cartoon comedy. It's evident in Super Robot Taisen OG Saga, and now in Attack of the Saiyans, an RPG spun off of Akira Toriyama's classic Dragon Ball Z property.

Attack of the Saiyans retells an early DBZ saga, when Vegeta and his fellow extraterrestrial tough guys first had a go at conquering Earth. Aside from that central storyline, though, there are plenty of subplots and side quests featuring some of the show's minor characters; Goku doesn't hog every bit of the spotlight. A diverse cast of heroes makes the game more interesting to play, too, since each has a different set of martial-arts skills and "Sparking!" team-up attacks.

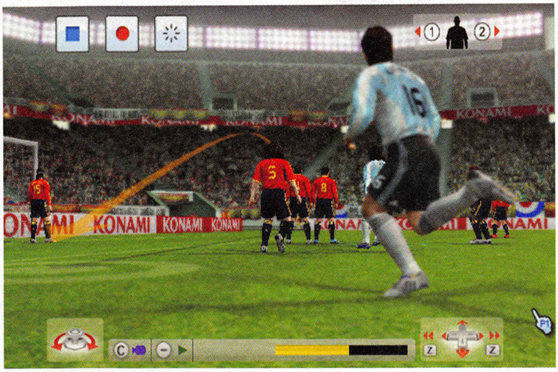
It takes only a glance to tell that Monolith's artists do justice to the colorful style of the DBZ cartoons. It's more of a surprise to read the script and see that Toriyama's slapstick-y humor carries through, but Monolith Soft has been full of surprises lately. **—DAVID S.**

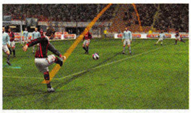
New Kicks

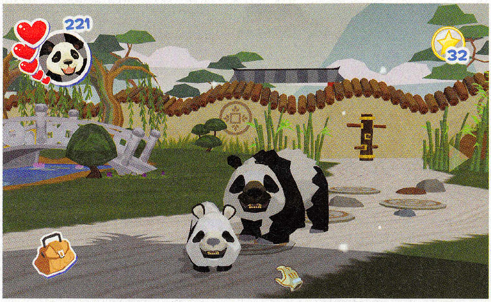
> PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2010

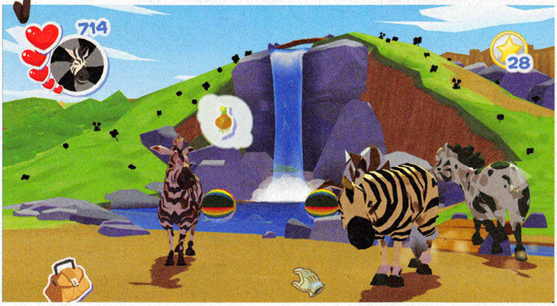
PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **KONAMI** • RELEASE: **FALL 2009**

Cleats-on-the-grass authenticity has always been a major goal for Konami's Pro Evolution Soccer team, and for the 2010 iteration they developed a new balance system that adds even more true-to-life challenge for players on both sides of the ball. If you relied on all-out sprints on offense to beat defenders in previous years' games, you'll have to rethink your strategy this fall, as the new Instantaneous Stamina feature keeps athletes from being able to run at full speed for long stints without having a negative effect on ball control. Hard play on defense, such as repeated attempts to steal the ball, also wears down your players. And AI improvements encourage you to pay attention to the actions of the opposing players who are away from the ball as they set up attacks on the goal. New animations, an improved graphic treatment, and a license with the UEFA Champions League all add up to what is sure to be a winning season. —**GEORGE S.**









Creature Comforts

> WORLD OF ZOO

PLATFORM: **Wii (ALSO ON DS)** • PUBLISHER: **THQ**
DEVELOPER: **BLUE FANG** • RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2009**

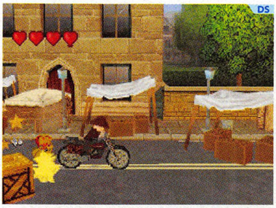
If you're looking to spend some quality time interacting with and caring for virtual animals, sure, you could fire up your copy of Nintendogs. But if you're looking for something a bit more exotic, you could play World of Zoo, which lets you get up close and personal with elephants, monkeys, crocodiles, giraffes, pandas, lions, tigers, zebras, and more. There are 11 animal families and 94 species in all, and you'll have the chance to make the critters happy by fulfilling their needs—bringing them food, playing with them using toys, and attending to them with tools (such as a brush, a hose, and a poop-vac). As you care for the critters their affection will grow, and you'll unlock new animals and new parts of exhibits (a pool or a waterslide for the penguins, for example). Additionally, you'll be able to completely customize the traits and appearances of all the animals in the game, allowing you to create a zoo that's uniquely your own. —**CHRIS H.**

We Meet Again, Dr. Jones

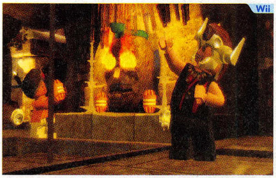
>LEGO INDIANA JONES 2: THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES

PLATFORM: **Wii (ALSO ON DS)** • PUBLISHER: **LUCASARTS**
DEVELOPER: **TRAVELLER'S TALES**
RELEASE: **NOVEMBER 2009**

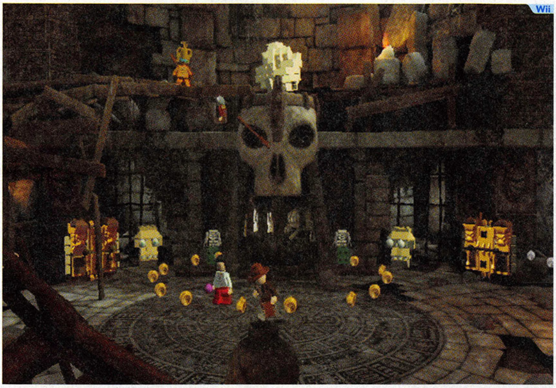
After last year's first LEGO Indiana Jones game—which took elements from the first three movies—you might think the sequel is just a LEGO-ized version of *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull.* Fortunately, that's not the case. While about half the game is dedicated to the events of the 2008 film, the other half reenacts the first three Indiana Jones flicks in brand-new ways. In the *Temple of Doom* section, for instance, Indy and Short Round have to fight Mola Ram, who's standing on top of a huge living statue of Kali. Indy has to throw water bottles at Kali's foot, extinguishing the flames, which allows Short Round to climb up through the statue and knock Mola Ram off the monstrous boss's head. Indy can then target one of Kali's many limbs and whip it off. In addition to the new ginormous bosses, LEGO Indiana Jones 2 features refinements such as split-screen co-op (the screen splits only when you get too far away from your human-controlled partner) and greatly expanded hub worlds to explore between levels. If you're not content with the levels provided, you can also create your own. **—JUSTIN C.**



[Above] The vehicle segments have improved quite a bit. [Below] Take Mola Ram down...again!



DS
INDIANA JONES



Wii
PlayStation 2
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES SMASH-UP
UBISOFT

PREPARE FOR AN ALL-OUT BRAWL.

AVAILABLE NOW TMNTGAME.COM

EVERYONE 10+
Cartoon Violence
Mild Suggestive Themes
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

MIRAGE STUDIOS, INC.

Wii

PS2 PlayStation 2

UBISOFT

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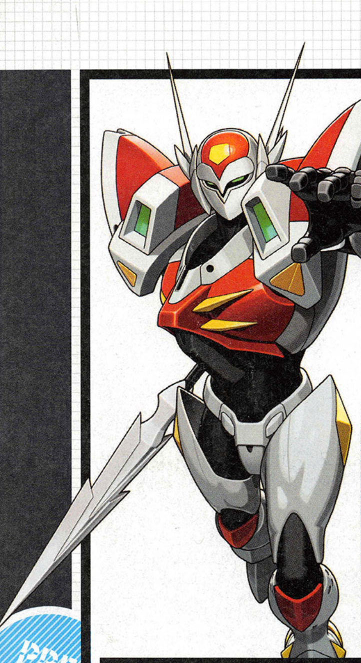
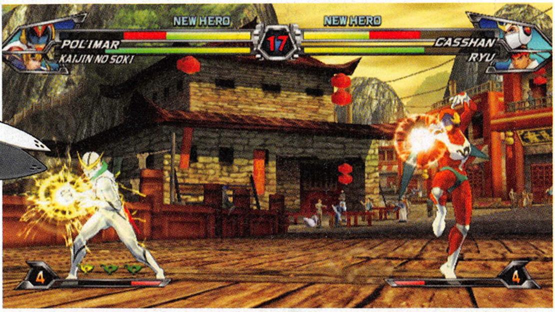
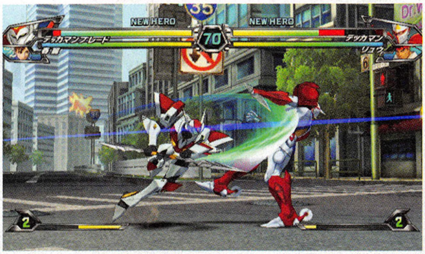



NEW HERO
NEW HERO
POL'IMAR
KAIJIN NO SOKI
17
CASSHAN
RYU
4
4


NEW HERO
NEW HERO
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NEW HERO
KARAS
KAIJIN NO SOKI
37
TEKKAMAN
SAKI
3 HIT
5.185 BILLION

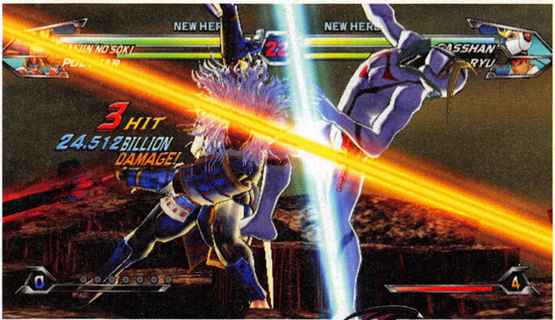
PREVIEW
NOVEMBER '09

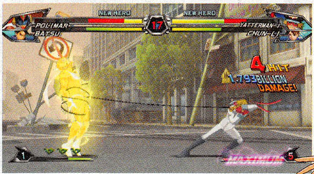
Animayhem

> TATSUNOKO VS. CAPCOM: ULTIMATE ALL-STARS

PLATFORM: **Wii** • PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **CAPCOM** • RELEASE: **WINTER 2010**

Tatsunoko vs. Capcom: Ultimate All-Stars just might be the most insane fighting game ever made. Not only does it feature famous Capcom video game heroes such as Ryu, Morrigan, Mega Man, and Viewtiful Joe fighting against anime characters such as Ken the Eagle, Tekkaman, Casshan, and Karas, but it does so with two-on-two tag-team action and some of the flashiest moves you'll ever see. Whether you're playing with the Wii Remote and Nunchuk (great for beginners) or using the GameCube or Classic Controllers (which give full control for fighting purists), you'll be treated to a seemingly endless array of aerial combos, special moves, and meter-based hyperattacks. And it gets better: while the game features almost all of the content found in the original Japanese release of Tatsunoko vs. Capcom (which came out about a year ago), it also features new Wi-Fi modes and at least four additional characters. The first new character announced is Tekkaman Blade—essentially a '90s reimagining of the Tekkaman character—who specializes in midair strikes and close-range combat using his trusty dual-bladed Teklancer spear. He's just one more reason why fighting-game fans are anxiously awaiting the title's winter release. —**CHRIS H.**


NEW HERO
NEW HERO
KAIJIN NO SOKI
POL'IMAR
22
CASSHAN
RYU
3 HIT
24.512 BILLION
DAMAGE!
0
4


NEW HERO
NEW HERO
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BATSU
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YATTERMAN-1
CHUN-LI
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DAMAGE!
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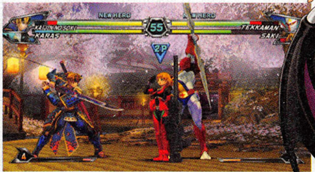
NEW HERO
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KARAS
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TEKKAMAN
SAKI
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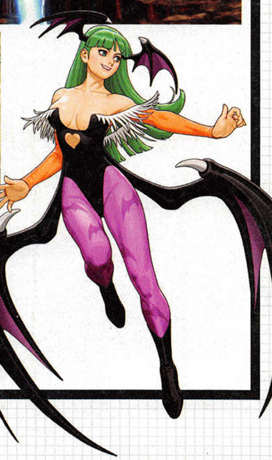
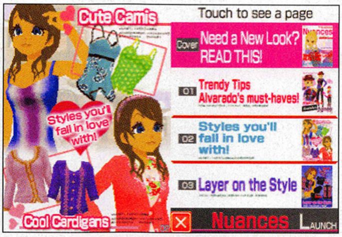


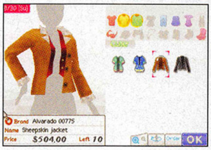
Stylin' and Profilin'

>STYLE SAVVY

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS** • PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **SYN SOFIA** • RELEASE: **HOLIDAY 2009**

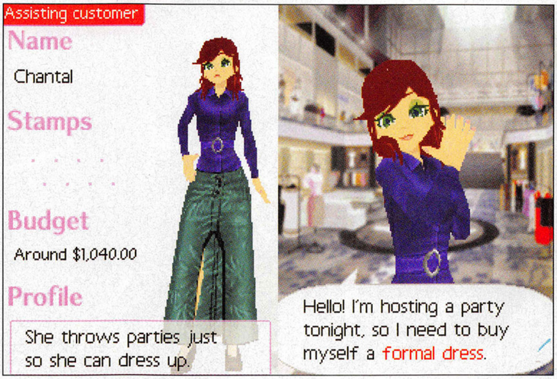
Nintendo games are usually all about heroic action. Mario saves the princess. Link saves the kingdom. In Style Savvy, you get to save people from a different kind of trouble: fashion emergencies. Say, for example, a person walks into your store looking for a new jacket. Using the stylus, you peruse the stock room in search of the ideal article of clothing. Once you think you've found the appropriate one—the garment has to fit the shopper's budget and style—you can see if it's actually what she wants. "Take a look!" you can say, and you can determine if you chose the right threads by her responses. (You get only three attempts, however.) If you know it's what she wants, you can tell her, "Try it on!" and the customer will do just that. A successful encounter leads to income for the store (with which you purchase new outfits) and a happy patron who will return to purchase more stuff. You can use that money to improve your boutique, then show off your shop to a friend via Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection. —**JUSTIN C.**


Cute Camis
Touch to see a page
Cover
Need a New Look? READ THIS!
Nuances
01 Trendy Tips Alvarado's must-haves!
02 Styles you'll fall in love with!
03 Layer on the Style
Styles you'll fall in love with!
Cool Cardigans
Nuances
LAUNCH



Brand Alvarado 00775
Name Sheepskin jacket
Price $504.00 Left 10

[Above] Make sure the clothes you pick out suit the customer. [Left] Check out fashion magazines to create new ensembles and outfits.



Name
Chantal

Stamps

Budget
Around $1,040.00

Profile
She throws parties just so she can dress up.

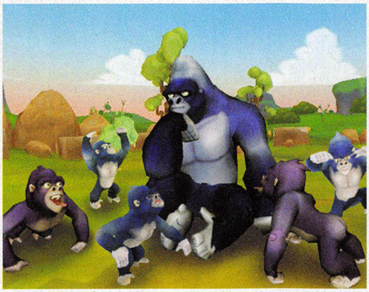
Hello! I'm hosting a party tonight, so I need to buy myself a formal dress.

King of the Jungle

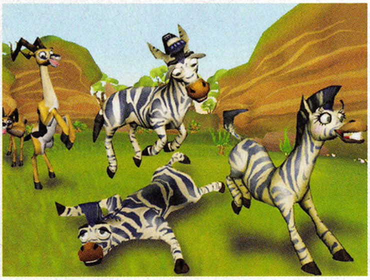
>SIMANIMALS AFRICA

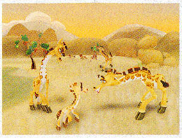
PLATFORM: **Wii (ALSO ON DS)**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **THE SIMS STUDIO** • RELEASE: **OCTOBER 2009**

Building on the foundation of the original SimAnimals (released earlier this year), this sequel expands the premise by bringing animal-lovers to a new continent populated by an all-new set of wild beasts: lions, zebras, rhinos, giraffes, gorillas, and more. Your job in the game is to befriend the local fauna and complete tasks given to you by magic animal totems. In the Wii version of the game, once you've raised an animal's friendship level (accomplished by petting, feeding, and playing minigames such as ring toss), you'll be able to take direct control of the critter and use creature-specific abilities, such as digging with hippos, spraying water with elephants, and pouncing with lions. By using these abilities you'll be able to complete a variety of missions and unlock extra areas that contain additional plants and animals. There's also a DS version of SimAnimals Africa, in which you can have a friend join you for some co-op action. —**CHRIS H.**



[Below] The creatures in SimAnimals Africa have remarkably expressive faces—and disturbingly well-groomed eyelashes.

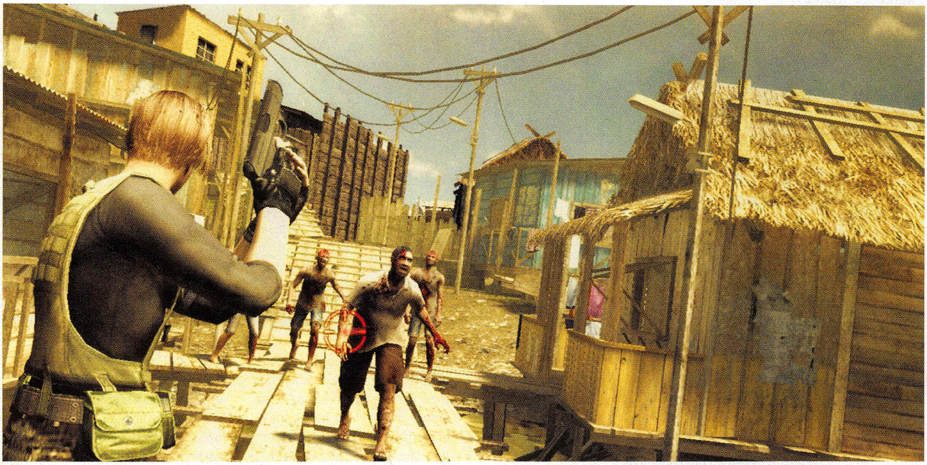




Shoot your way through the other half of the Resident Evil series in Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles for Wii.

JOURNEY *to the* DARKSIDE

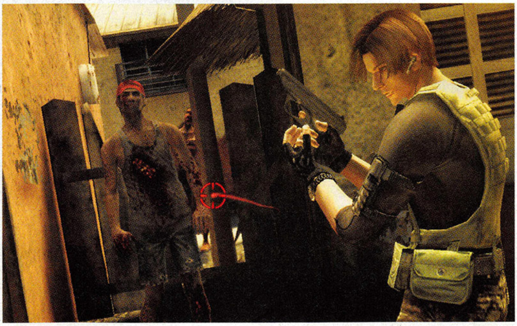
BY JUSTIN CHENG



Few things in video gaming are as satisfying as blasting zombies. Titles such as The House of the Dead or Left 4 Dead are proof positive of this, but the one series that has the most rabid fan base is Resident Evil. Maybe it's because Resident Evil was the first to really nail the balance between horror and action—it coined the term "survival-horror," after all—or maybe it's because of the franchise's indelible characters. Whatever it is, you get it in light-gun shooter Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles.

Like 2007's Mature-rated The Umbrella Chronicles—which was a shooting-centric, CliffsNotes-esque version of Resident Evils 0, 1, and 3—The Darkside Chronicles features three scenarios: Resident Evil 2, Resident Evil: Code Veronica, and a brand-new adventure in South America. There's a specific reason that The Umbrella Chronicles and The Darkside Chronicles were divided this way, explains producer Masachika Kawata. Whereas the three games spotlighted in The Umbrella Chronicles are tied together by long-running antagonist Albert Wesker, "The Darkside Chronicles is a story of dark memories. Terrible memories of the past link the chain of events in The Darkside Chronicles. Wesker will not appear

Some of our favorite Resident Evil characters all in one game? Sounds good to us.



PLATFORM **Wii** | PUBLISHER **CAPCOM** | DEVELOPER **CAVIA/CAPCOM** | RELEASE **NOVEMBER 2009**

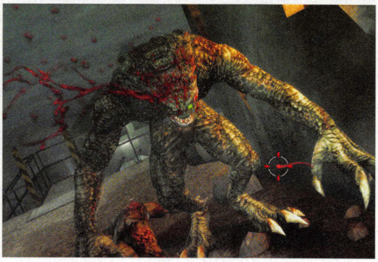
LEON
Hopefully we find out how Leon Scott Kennedy went from a naïve rookie cop to a badass government agent.

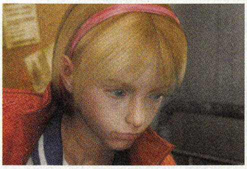
as he did in the previous game, however. In that case, to whom do these dark memories belong?" The answer, Kawata indicates, is one—or perhaps all—of the game's four main characters: Claire Redfield, Leon S. Kennedy, Steve Burnside, and Jack Krauser.

DARKSIDE RISING

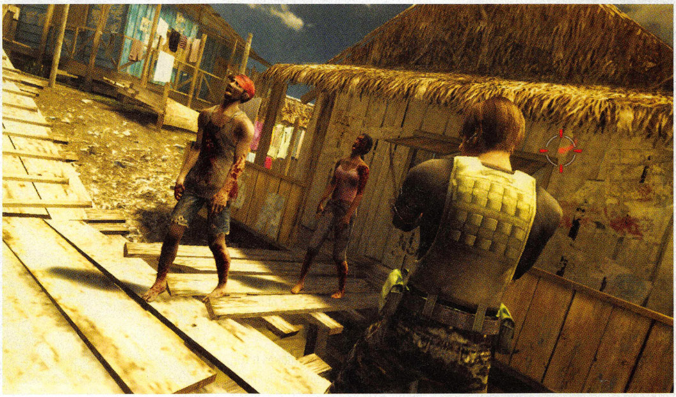
Certainly, Claire and Leon are the two likeliest candidates, as these two kick off The Darkside Chronicles with the Resident Evil 2 section. The level we played takes place early on; Claire and Leon enter the police station and meet an injured police officer named Marvin by the fountain in the foyer. (Longtime fans know that Marvin was found elsewhere in the original game, but some changes had to be made.) They then decide to set off to explore the rest of the station. As they proceed through blood-stained areas, they come across malformed monsters called Lickers for the first time. It's a memorable moment for those who have already played Resident Evil 2, but it's presented in a new way with a much faster, more frenetic pace that's enhanced by the handheld-style camera. "Not only does the shaky cam movement make the gameplay more realistic, but it also adds great depth to the gameplay," proclaims Kawata. "It is so much fun when your bullets hit enemies or when you manage to target and aim at them while fighting against the jerky camera movements." (Based on what we've played so far, it seems the shaking camera doesn't affect

[Above] How awesome would it be if both Hunk and Tofu were playable characters? [Below] Hunters are no laughing matter.





[Left] It's Sherry Birkin, not Dakota Fanning.



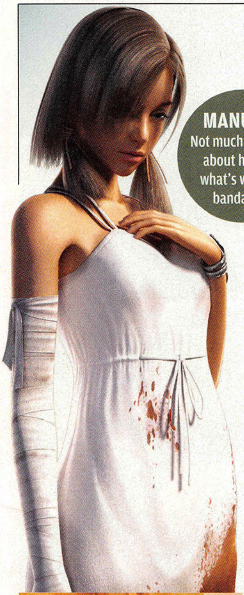
your aiming much; it's much more noticeable when you're running toward or away from something outside of combat.)

Unlike in The Umbrella Chronicles, you can't move the camera with the Control Stick (the game controls the camera entirely); instead, the Control Stick is used to swap between four weapons—assigned to the up, down, left, and right directions—which proves particularly useful when using the Wii Zapper peripheral. Naturally, you can play with the Wii Remote controller by itself, too: select weapons with the Control Pad, press B to shoot, shake the remote to reload, tap A to interact with objects, and hold A and swing the remote to slash with your knife. ("Needless to say, there are some instances in which knives are much more useful," Kawata notes.) As the camera pans across the environment, you see several shootable objects—crates, for instance—that may hold new weapons, ammunition, or money. Gold is the currency that you use to upgrade your weapons, which include handguns, submachine guns, shotguns, bowguns, and grenades. (Thankfully, you and your buddy can both use the same armaments at the same time, though you have to share ammo.) "The number of weapons is not too large; instead, the arsenal allows you to refine your favorite weapons to further meet your needs rather than experiment with many," says Kawata. As in Resident Evil 4, you can improve a weapon's power, rate of fire, reload speed, capacity, and stopping power.

Of all the firearms, though, the pistols were definitely used the most in our play time; handguns allow you to perform one-hit-kill headshots, and they have unlimited ammo. After blasting the Lickers and trudging past the zombies that were trying to grab us through boarded-up windows, we encountered a young girl named Sherry Birkin. We saved her from the attacking zombies, but she fled from us; we gave chase back to the entrance of the police station, shooting zombies—including a zombified Marvin—along the way. This taste of the Resident Evil 2

No Four

With Leon S. Kennedy playing such a prominent role in The Darkside Chronicles, you might think the game would include his solo adventure, Resident Evil 4. Not so, says producer Masachika Kawata. "The biggest reason [that the game was not included in The Darkside Chronicles] was that Resident Evil 4 had already been released on Wii.... We also had an idea of making RE4 a gun shooter, but in deciding upon Leon's partner, Ashley, Luis, or Ada turned out to be impossible in terms of scenario. Thus we decided not to force ourselves to include RE4 in this game."



MANUELA
Not much is known about her, but what's with the bandages?

portion of The Darkside Chronicles approximates what happens in the original game, only it moves at a much faster pace.

ENTER THE TYRANT

The Code Veronica part, too, is similar to the original. The level we played focused on Claire and her ally Steve Burnside trying to get to a plane in order to escape from the monster-filled Rockfort Island. Unfortunately, the insane manager of the island, Alfred Ashford, has other plans and sics human-size froglike creatures called Hunters on them. Claire and Steve must traverse through the island's dark, Hunter-filled mansion. Hunters are fast—certainly faster than shuffling zombies—and can jump around. Getting a bead on them can prove challenging, but like most enemies, they go down with enough bullets. (It's pretty funny when a Hunter drops right in front of you, and you and your pal each unload a whole magazine of bullets into it before it has a chance to strike.)

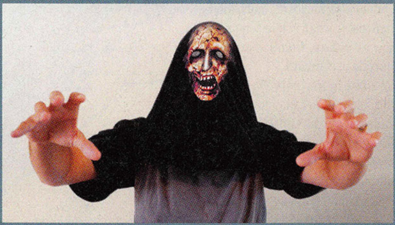
The pair eventually makes it to their destination and boards the plane. (Before takeoff, the camera cuts to a familiar face hiding in the shadows: Albert Wesker. You knew he had to show up at some point!) Just when they think they've escaped, however, they discover a stowaway that just happens to be a giant being known as the Tyrant. A tough boss battle ensues (the difficulty is still being tuned) as Claire and Steve fight for their lives.

We're told there are several ways to go about defeating this baddie, but we relied on blasting him in the face to prevent him from taking a highly damaging swing at us, and on interacting with objects in the environment to push him out of the cargo hold. Pushing a button, for example, releases a heavy crate that rams the Tyrant backward. It's not enough to make him let go completely, though, and he climbs back onto the plane. (You have to perform a quick-time event—tap A when the button appears onscreen, for instance—to avoid getting hit as he rises.) Luckily, someone's left a missile in

Zombie Up

We usually don't talk about promotional items, but this one is pretty darn awesome. If you preorder Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles at GameStop, you can get this Darkside Chronicles-branded T-shirt. So what, you say? Well, for one, it was originally released in very limited quantities at this year's San Diego Comic-Con International, so its initial scarcity makes it kind of cool. Even better, though, it can transform you into a zombie—simply pull the front of the T-shirt over your head, and you're ready to munch on tasty brains and/or do the "Thriller" dance!

LET YOUR DARKSIDE OUT



Is Manuela a damsel in distress, or is she something more nefarious? All we know is that Javier kidnapped her for some reason.

ANIMAL KINGDOM

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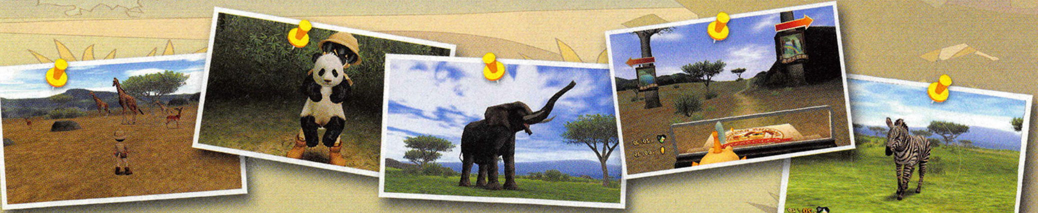

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Mild Violence

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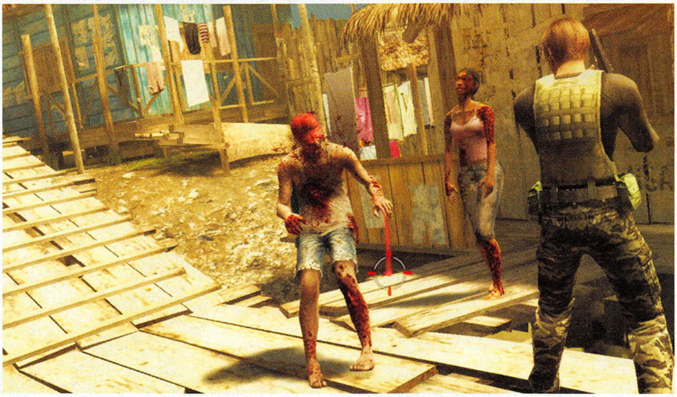
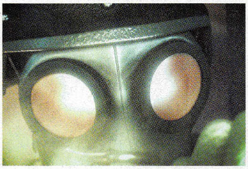
[Below left] The game is played from the first-person perspective, but your partner will sometimes show his face (or back, in this case).





the cargo hold. You have to swiftly shoot the couplings to free the projectile and unleash it on the Tyrant, who then explodes as he is shot out of the plane. Before you can celebrate too much, though, you hear that the plane has an autopilot that's taking you to an Umbrella facility. (In the original Code Veronica, Claire's brother Chris comes into the picture around this time; however, we got no confirmation that Chris would be a playable character, though we know he does appear in the game in some form.)

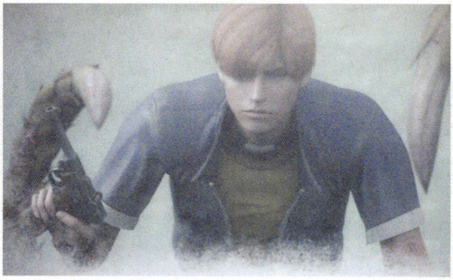
SOUTHWARD BOUND

But this is all old hat for those who have played through the Resident Evil games already. Fortunately, The Darkside Chronicles includes an entirely new scenario in which Leon is investigating strange happenings in South America in 2002. The location was chosen specifically because it's dissimilar to the game's other two sections. "We wanted to use a new setting with a stronger impact than before," elaborates Kawata. "We also wanted to create brand-new characters with unique names. In this regard, South America seemed very attractive, and we thought it would provide a mysterious setting suited to conveying the fear after the Raccoon City incident."

One of these new characters is a man named Javier, who is suspected of kidnapping women throughout the area. "[Javier] is a key figure in the game.... Let's say for now that he is a very bad guy. In a way, he is the foil of Wesker," Kawata hints. In that case, it's a good thing Leon's not working alone; he's got future rival Jack Krauser—who was originally introduced in Resident Evil 4—by his side. "Everyone loves Krauser. So do I!" Kawata exclaims. "In order to make a two-player game

Setting the Mood

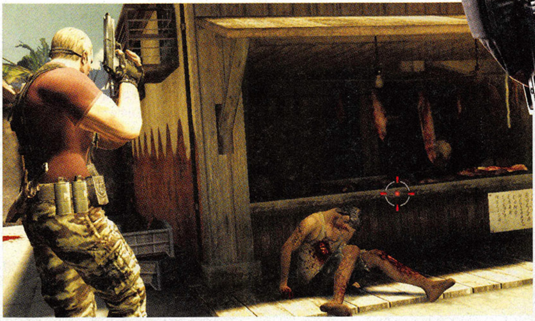
Composers Shusaku Uchiyama and Takeshi Miura—both of whom have worked on Resident Evil soundtracks before (Resident Evil 2 and Code Veronica, respectively)—have returned to write and arrange music for The Darkside Chronicles. "The basic melody and composition follow the original ones," producer Masachika Kawata remarks. "The composers have arranged the score to enhance the game's quality. As a result, the soundtrack complements the action, stirring up excitement, horror, and an impending sense of doom." Kawata adds, "The use of a full orchestra for some songs proved to be effective in expanding the scale of the game. I have the orchestra version of the soundtrack on my iPod. I listen to it all the time and seriously never get tired of listening to it."



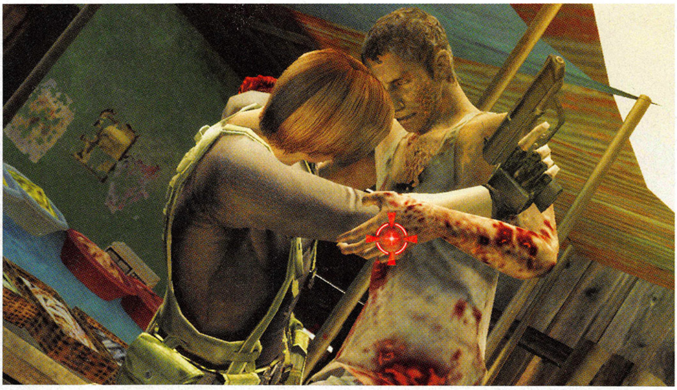
system, we needed to come up with a scenario with two characters working as partners. Krauser came to mind the instant we needed a partner for Leon in the South America stage. We are confident that they make a formidable team."

While looking for Javier, Leon and Krauser explore a sun-drenched, seemingly abandoned village that is reminiscent of environments from Resident Evil 5 (for PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360). While this might seem intentional, Kawata tells us it was not: "Having established a more advanced system in terms of light-source

KRAUSER
Producer Masachika Kawata points out that Jack Krauser doesn't have his facial scar yet.



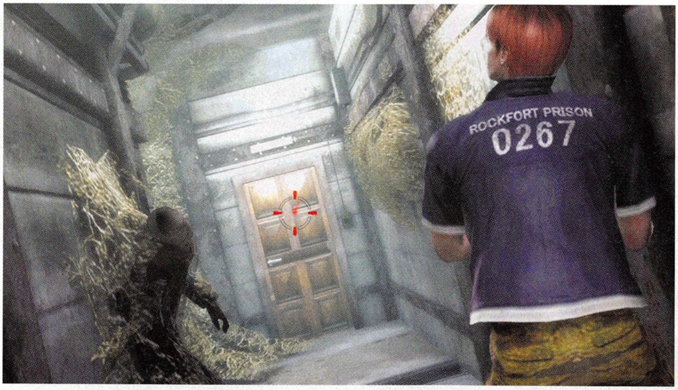
Seeing Leon and Krauser join forces is a bit like watching Obi-Wan and Anakin team up in the *Star Wars* prequels.



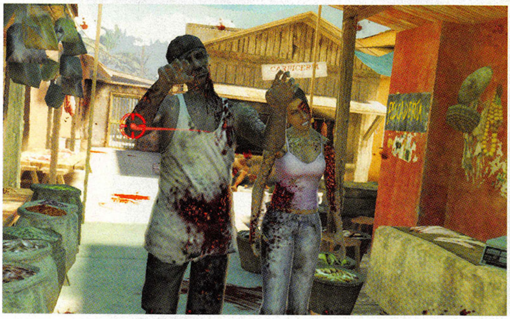
processing compared to the last installment, we wanted to take advantage of the new system by incorporating day and night scenes in the game. Although Darkside is a horror game, we do not feel bound to darkness. By introducing light, we thought we could offer a different sensation when playing a horror game." Once the zombies appeared, it didn't matter if it was day or night—we just had to get out of there before we were surrounded. The camera shake became especially prevalent as we ran through the city's alleyways.

As we reached the outskirts of the city, we trudged through some flooded houses. In addition to the zombies wandering about, Leon and Krauser have to watch out for carnivorous frogs; thankfully, a few quick swipes with a knife makes short work of them. (Kawata was right—knives are handy!) At the end of this waterlogged village is a church, in which a woman named Manuela—one of the people Javier kidnapped—lies on the ground. As Leon and Krauser try to help her, a tentacled sea monster attacks, leading to a boss fight. Unlike the more complex Tyrant battle in Code Veronica, this one is pretty straightforward: keep shooting until it's dead.

Without question, Resident Evil: The Darkside Chronicles is an action-heavy adventure because, well, that's the very nature of the light-gun shooter genre. But there's more to it than that. It's a game with a story to tell—or rather, several stories—as its heavy emphasis on interaction between the two playable characters illustrates. In fact, Kawata claims that this game has three times as much dialogue as The Umbrella Chronicles. "We had such a hard time putting all the large-scale stories into one package." Kawata laughs, "The Darkside Chronicles is a great deal because it ties all the stories into one." Judging by what we've played so far, we have to agree.



[Above] This looks like something out of *Aliens*. Better send Steve in first.



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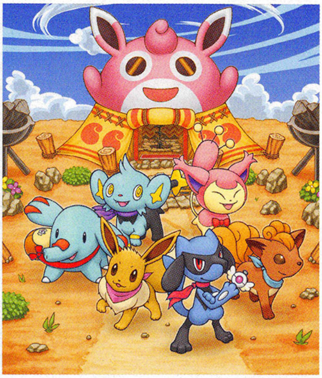
A Visitor's Guide to Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky

Join us as we explore a charming new addition to the Pokémon Mystery Dungeon series.

ILLUSTRATION BY KEN SUGIMORI

BY SCOTT PELLAND

THERE ARE SO many things to experience when visiting the Pokémon Mystery Dungeon world that we thought a quick travel guide might help acclimate you to the sights, sounds, and adventures in store. Without further ado, we present our list of top attractions in Explorers of Sky.

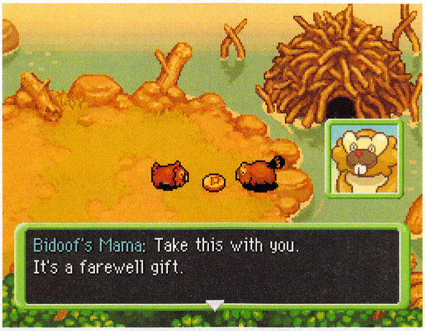


LIVING THE EXCITING LIFE OF A POKÉMON

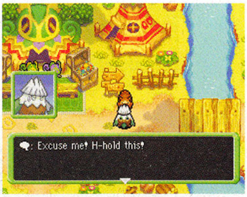
Who knew that life as a Pokémon could be so thrilling? Every day is filled with exploration, adventure, rescues, and friendship. When you first visit Explorers of Sky, you will wake up to find you've been turned into a Pokémon, and you'll have a partner Pokémon with whom you will venture far and wide, helping good Pokémon, arresting outlaws, battling in dungeons, collecting treasure, and solving mysteries. You'll eat, sleep, talk, and live as a Pokémon for the duration of your stay. Frankly, the biggest adjustment might be when you take a break from the game and realize life as a human pretty tame.

EMBRACING YOUR INNER BIDOOF

You'll meet Bidoof—the junior-most apprentice at Wigglytuff's Guild—shortly after you arrive. He may seem klutzy, but he really just needs to build up his confidence. You'll have the opportunity to experience life as Bidoof in Bidoof's Wish, one of the unlockable side quests called Special Episodes that take place apart from the main game. While running an errand for Chatot, you (playing as Bidoof) will become embroiled in an adventure that leads to the mysterious Star Cave, where you and Snover search for Jirachi, whom it is said can grant a wish to the Pokémon who wakes him. For Bidoof, the chance to go on a real exploration is an opportunity to grow, and with your help, he'll survive the twists and turns of the dungeon

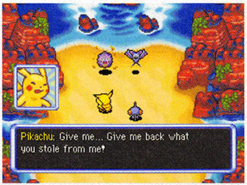


Bidoof's Mama: Take this with you.
It's a farewell gift.



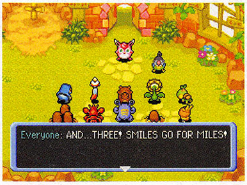
: Excuse me! H-hold this!

[Above right] A chance meeting sets the adventure in motion.

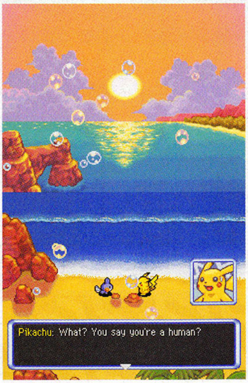


Pikachu: Give me... Give me back what you stole from me!

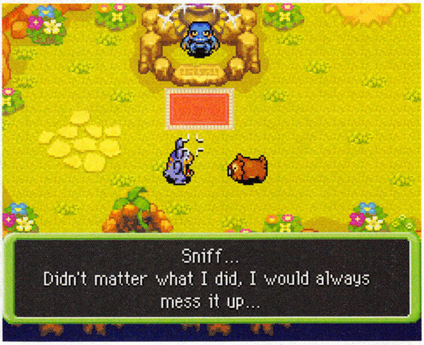
[Below] You and your partner will become Wigglytuff Guild apprentices.



Everyone: AND...THREE! SMILES GO FOR MILES!

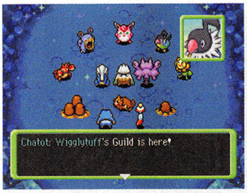


Pikachu: What? You say you're a human?

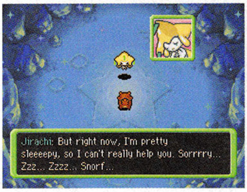


Sniff...
Didn't matter what I did, I would always
mess it up...

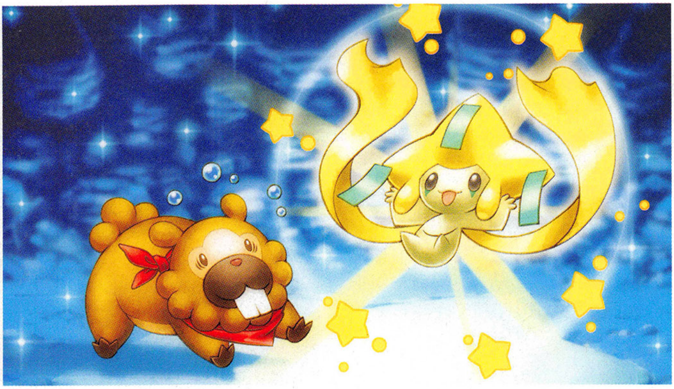
PLATFORM **NINTENDO DS** | PUBLISHER **NINTENDO** | DEVELOPER **CHUNSOFT** | RELEASE **FALL 2009**



Chatot: Wigglytuff's Guild is here!



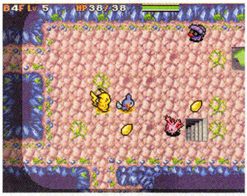
Jirachi: But right now, I'm pretty sleeeepy, so I can't really help you. Sorrrry... Zzz... Zzzz... Snorf...

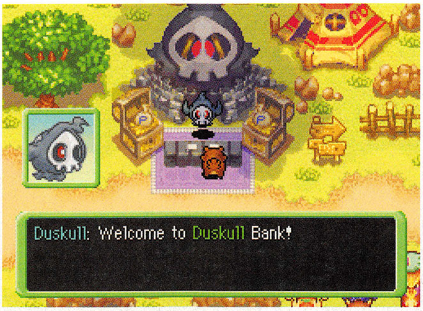


and realize his greatest wish. We don't want to spoil the adventure, so we'll just say that it's filled with surprises.

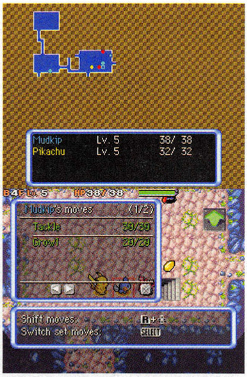
DUNGEON CRAWLING FOR FUN AND PROFIT

Museums and parks in the human world are nice places to visit, but they can't match the thrill of plunging into a Mystery Dungeon as a Pokémon. Every visitor to Explorers of Sky should prepare themselves for the hardships and excitement of dungeon exploration. Mystery Dungeons are scattered across the land; some of them wind deep underground, while others wander through a forest or climb up a mountain. Dungeons are where you'll battle unruly Pokémon, earn money, gather items, meet and recruit new team members, build your experience levels, and complete jobs for the Guild.





Duskull: Welcome to Duskull Bank!

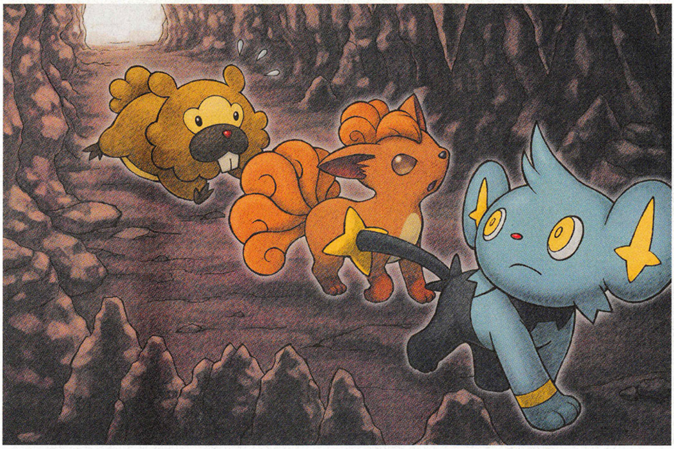


Mudkip Lv. 5 38/ 38
Pikachu Lv. 5 32/ 32

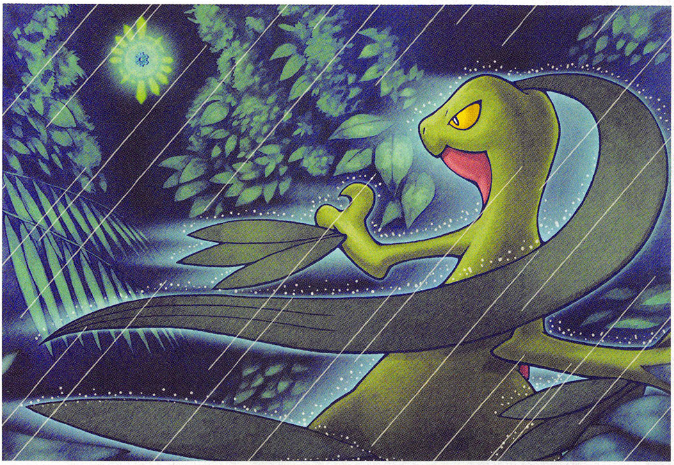
Mudkip's moves (1/2)
Tackle 30/30
Growl 20/20

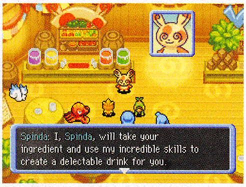
Shift moves: R+A
Switch set moves: SELECT

[Above] You can switch and set moves or use items in battle.

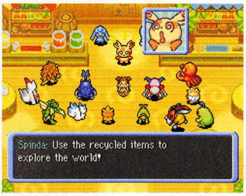


B4F Lv. 29 HP71/ 71



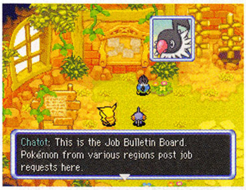


Spinda: I, Spinda, will take your ingredient and use my incredible skills to create a delectable drink for you.

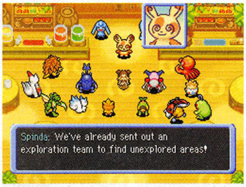


Spinda: Use the recycled items to explore the world!

[Above] Spinda has big plans to help explorers with recycled items.



Chatot: This is the Job Bulletin Board. Pokémon from various regions post job requests here.



Spinda: We've already sent out an exploration team to find unexplored areas!

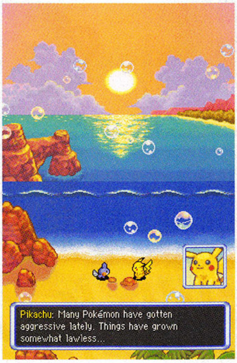
But be forewarned that Mystery Dungeons are treacherous. A dungeon's layout changes every time you reenter it. And if you or your partner faint during a battle, you'll lose half your on-hand cash (money that's been deposited at Duskull's Bank will remain safe) and some of the items you're carrying will also vanish. Battles are turn-based, and type-trumping, item use, and strategic thinking are required. Fortunately, even if you faint, you can send an SOS to a friend who has journeyed at least as far as you have.

HAVING THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE

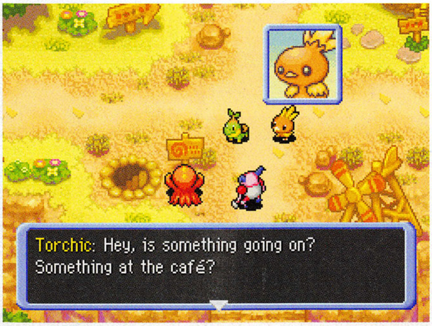
You arrive in Explorers of Sky at a momentous time. The world is slipping into chaos. Bad Pokémon seem to be on the increase. Innocent Pokémon are in desperate need of help. In fact, time itself is behaving oddly, and it all seems to be related to the mysterious disappearance of the Time Gears. Visitors to Explorers of Time and Explorers of Darkness will be familiar with many of these events. But the game's Special Episodes, along with several other changes, make for an even more involving adventure.

JOINING THE CROWD AT SPINDA'S CAFÉ

Our favorite haunt near Treasure Town is a new establishment called Spinda's Café, which opened for business not long after we arrived in Explorers of Sky. The café (near the crossroads, just a short stroll down the hill from Wigglytuff's Guild) is the center of the local social scene, where



Pikachu: Many Pokémon have gotten aggressive lately. Things have grown somewhat lawless...



Torchic: Hey, is something going on? Something at the café?

[Above] The well leads to Spinda's Café, where explorers congregate.

Pokémon come to mix healthy drinks, recycle items, or meet new team members before heading off to investigate unexplored dungeons. During the café's grand opening, Spinda revealed Project P—a plan to help exploration teams as they investigate a wealth of new unexplored Mystery Dungeons. When you stop by Spinda's Café, be sure to bring your favorite berries to have them made into a tasty treat!

PARTAKING OF FRIENDLY VISITOR SERVICES

Traveling away from home and your friends can be difficult, but communication services between visitors to Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky visitors are high-tech and user-friendly. Using local wireless communications, Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection, or, in some cases, passwords, visitors can send mail, trade items, give gifts, and even request a rescue party should they faint while exploring a Mystery Dungeon. We recommend staying in touch with your friends since fainting is a common occurrence among visitors. Remarkably, you can even trade with people who are visiting Explorers of Time and Explorers of Darkness.

TAKING THE SHORT TOUR

An extended trip to Explorers of Sky requires a considerable commitment in time if you hope to see and experience everything this marvelous world has to offer. Fortunately, for those who want to sample the unique activities before making that commitment, a short demonstration tour is available via DS Download Play. By connecting wirelessly to a traveler who has a copy of the game in their DS, you'll have the chance to visit one of several Demo Dungeons. For the duration of that exploration, you'll experience just what it's like to be a Pokémon in a Mystery Dungeon.

BE SMART! BE SAFE!

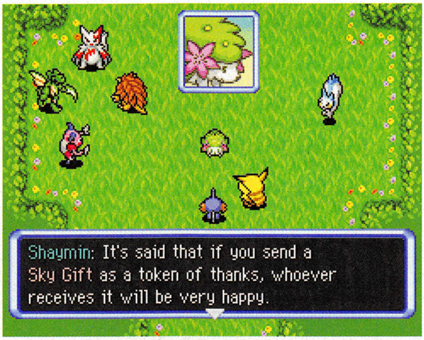
Not everything is what it seems in this world. Items that look like other items but that have a very different effect if you use them might turn up as you collect things. Sometimes those "look-alike" items might have a negative impact. Take care not to eat or use what you find without closely examining the item first.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING WITH SHAYMIN

No journey to Explorers of Sky would be complete without an expedition up Sky Peak with a very special Pokémon named Shaymin. For many, this new chapter will be the highlight of the adventure. It's a rigorous climb that requires careful preparations, but the base camps you'll encounter during your assent will be welcome waypoints. Other Pokémon will attempt the climb, as well, so you should keep in mind the code of mountaineers: always help those in need. When you reach the top, you'll be rewarded with a special Sky Gift.

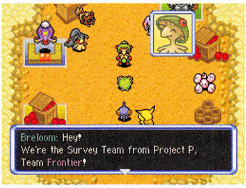
ENJOYING A GIFT OF MUSIC

As a reward later in your journeys, you'll receive a gift in the form of the Sky Jukebox, a music player that contains more than 100 tunes from your adventure. It is the perfect memento of your trip to the magical world of Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky.

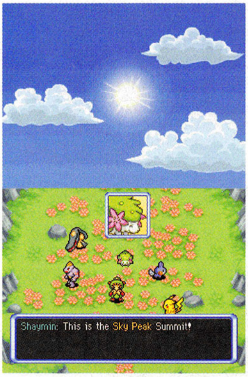


Shaymin: It's said that if you send a Sky Gift as a token of thanks, whoever receives it will be very happy.

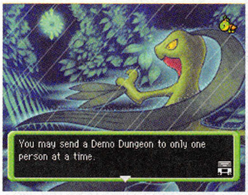
[Above] The mysterious Sky Gift remains unknown until it's opened. It's best given to a friend.



Breloom: Hey! We're the Survey Team from Project P, Team Frontier!

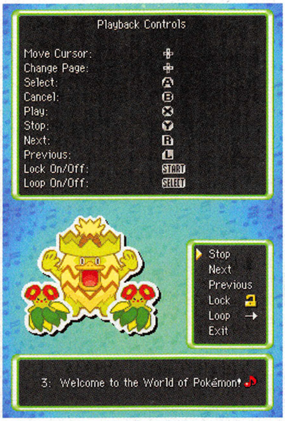


Shaymin: This is the Sky Peak Summit!



You may send a Demo Dungeon to only one person at a time.

[Above] Only one person at a time can receive a Demo Dungeon.



Playback Controls

Move Cursor: ✣
Change Page: ✣
Select: A
Cancel: B
Play: X
Stop: Y
Next: R
Previous: L
Lock On/Off: START
Loop On/Off: SELECT

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A destructive force threatens your world. Take up sword or staff and dare to rebuild the ancient alliance between the humans, elves, dwarves, and halflings.

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In ancient times, the four races united against a common enemy. That alliance has been long since forgotten, but the land of Eldar is threatened again.

Hire mercenaries of various races, customizing limitless combinations of abilities, skills, equipment and appearances.

Embark on a dangerous, multi-generational quest – the characters you begin your journey with may not see it through to the end.

Engage in brutal real-time battles, or join a friend for combat and exploration with online play.

VALHALLA KNIGHTS
ELDAR SAGA

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TEEN
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Alcohol Reference
Blood
Fantasy Violence

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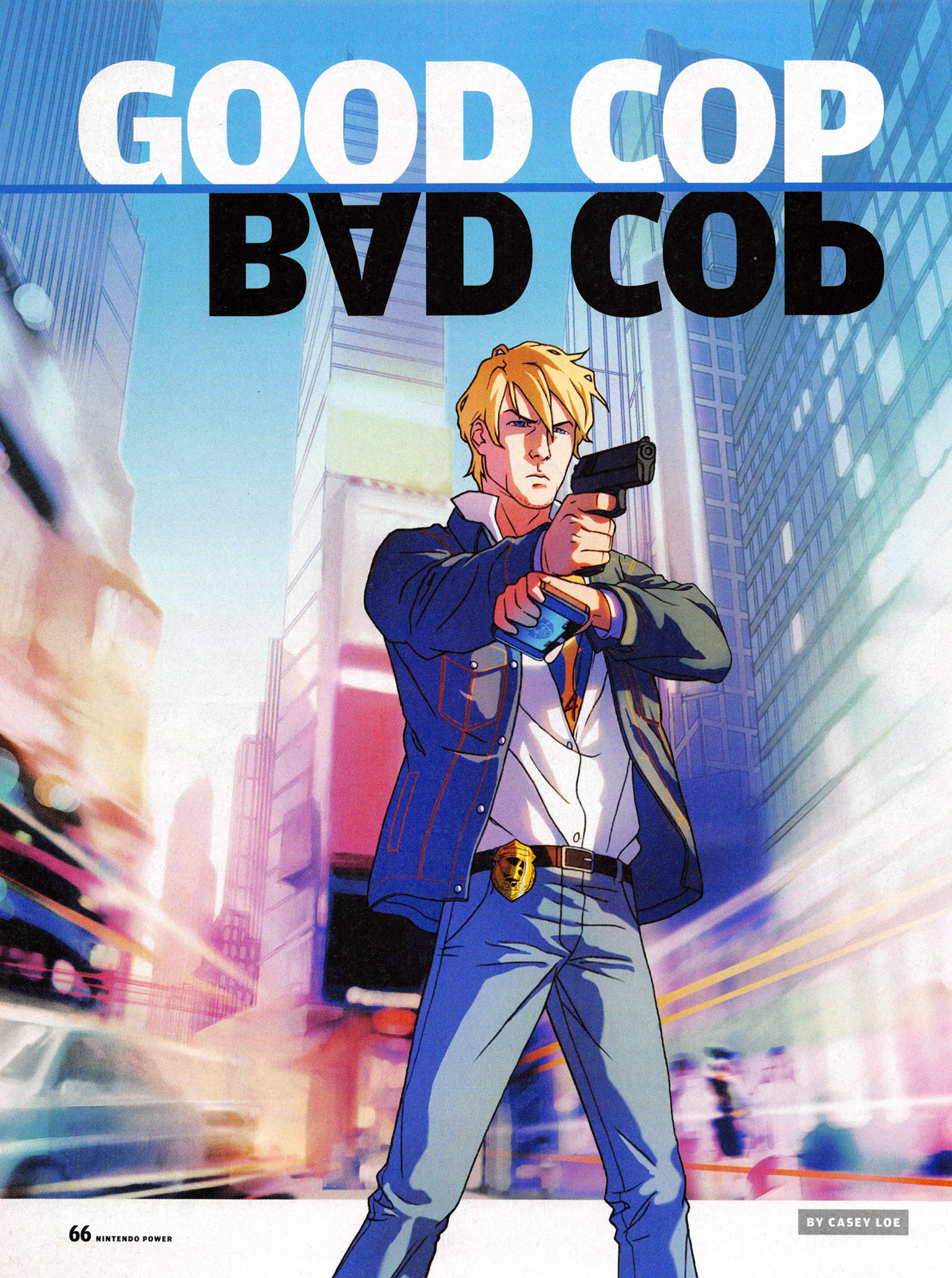
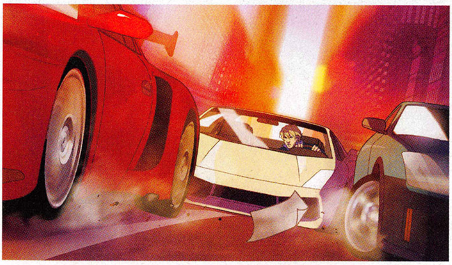


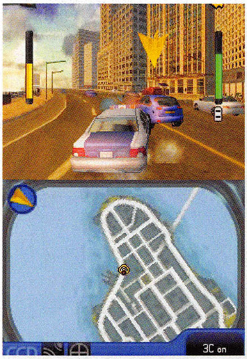
BY CASEY LOE

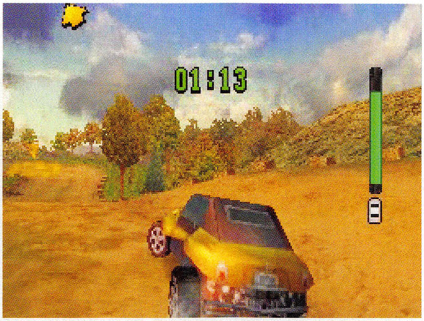
Grand Theft What? C.O.P. The Recruit out-GTAs GTA by bringing console-style graphics to a portable open-world thriller.

In our Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars debut interview, Rockstar Games VP Dan Houser explained that due to the technical limitations of the Nintendo DS system, Rockstar “couldn’t render a full 3-D city that could be fluid and heavily populated, so [we didn’t] even attempt to think about that.” But for the last two years, Nouredine Abboud and his 40-man team at Ubisoft have been thinking about *exactly* that, and somehow they’ve pulled it off. C.O.P. The Recruit offers a six-square-mile chunk of New York rendered in full 3-D at 60 frames per second, packed with high-resolution textures, recognizable landmarks, and swarms of pedestrians. It’s a stunning achievement for a platform that once struggled with simple ports of Nintendo 64 games.



The innovation was made possible by crackerjack coders Fernando Velez and Guillaume Dubail, who teamed up to form engine-development studio VD-Dev. After completing the software that allowed the GBA to handle the impressive 3-D worlds of games like DRIV3R and Stuntman, they turned their attention to the Nintendo DS, and brought an early version of their engine to Ubisoft. “VD-Dev built the engine’s fundamental technology and it was during our early talks with them that the whole idea for the game came about,” explains Abboud, the senior producer and codirector of C.O.P. The Recruit. “We set out with a clear goal: bring the quality of a home-console, mission-based, open-world game to the DS. While we faced some tech challenges along the way, I think people will be pleasantly surprised with the final product.”

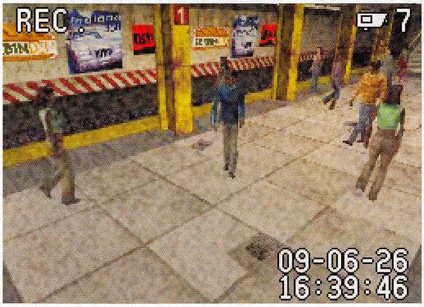


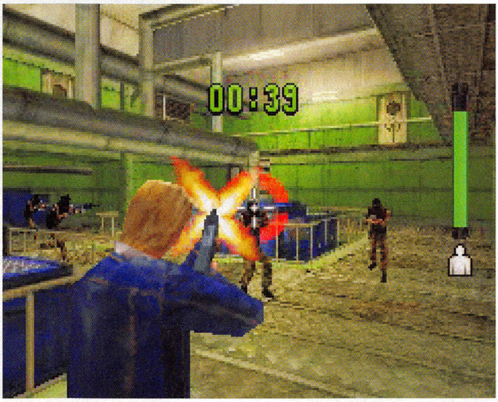


It Takes a Thief

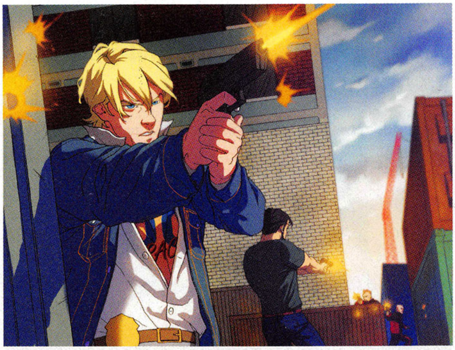
The titular recruit is Dan Miles, an adrenaline-junkie street racer and small-time criminal who ran afoul of the law. But his arresting officer suggested that instead of doing jail time, he join C.O.P.—the Criminal Overturn Program. So while law-abiding citizens with

[Below] Dan can use traffic cameras to keep an eye on perps, and borrow patrol cars to hunt them down.





PLATFORM **NINTENDO DS** | PUBLISHER **UBISOFT** | DEVELOPER **VD DEV** | RELEASE **OCTOBER 2009**



criminal justice degrees sit idly on police academy waiting lists, Dan is promptly handed a badge, an arsenal of guns, and the right to commandeer any car in the city. "Playing the role of the bad guy can be fun, but has been done before," suggests Abboud. "If you've played the other games and killed everyone in sight, play C.O.P.—it can actually be fun to save them too."

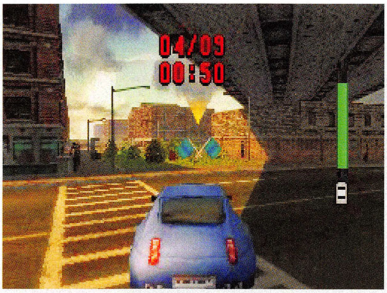
Part of what makes it so fun is that while you're ostensibly on the side of the law, there are absolutely no consequences to any crimes you commit. You can swipe any car you please, plow it straight through Central Park, and mow down any pedestrian who gets in your way. It's good to be the law. C.O.P. The Recruit isn't really interested in having players make moral choices, but its core story does dabble in such themes. The officer who recruited you begins the game in prison for stepping over the line a few times too many, and he hasn't exactly repented for those sins. As his man on the outside, you'll be expected to maintain his network of underworld contacts by doing favors for car thieves and taking sides in turf wars. But these missions are entirely for story purposes, and C.O.P. doesn't revel in criminality and violence like GTA does. In fact, C.O.P. is one of the few games in the genre to earn a Teen rating from the ESRB, which Abboud hopes will allow it to reach a much wider audience than his M-rated competitors.

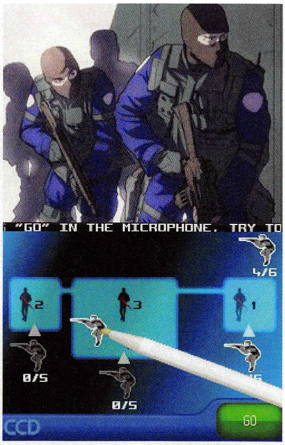
Life a Quarter Mile at a Time

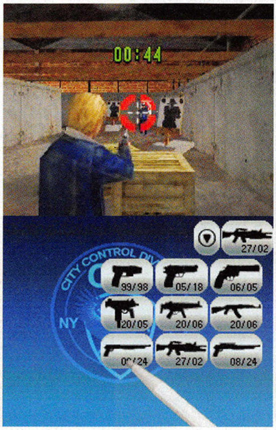
Consequences aren't the only things that Abboud eliminated in the name of fun. "We asked ourselves: what things do we usually find boring about open-world games? Once we put together our list, we made sure that C.O.P. didn't make those same mistakes." Free of lengthy event scenes, slow-paced subplots and "meaningless wandering," C.O.P. The Recruit is an intense experience that zips from one mission to the next. Players are free to explore all they want, and there are plenty of side quests to engage in, collectibles to find, and achievements to earn—but your next goal is always clear, and never more than a short drive away.

"We had to find a way to tell a compelling story using such a small screen, while taking into account that the player sometimes has a limited amount of time to play," explains Abboud. So his team made the missions shorter than in other games of its kind and made them easier to get in and out of—to start an on-foot mission you don't even have to park and exit your vehicle; you can just ram it into whatever building you've been sent to visit. The story, like the game, moves quickly. "We used 2-D cinematics for more engaging nonplayable moments and rewrote the script to home in on the essence of the story." That means comic-book panels with a few lines of text, and then right back to the action.

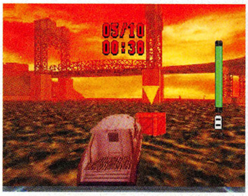
At the moment, the game's breakneck pacing can be a little bit disorienting, since the game has unique control schemes for every one of its game modes. For example, you use the Y, B, and A buttons to run and control the camera while you're exploring on

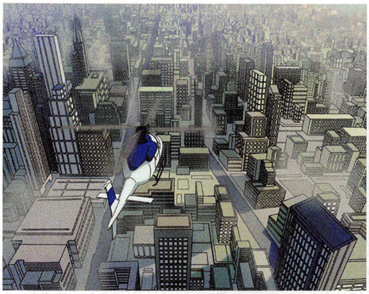


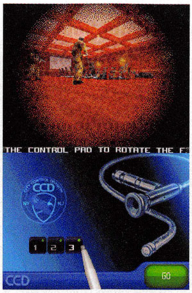




[Left] Is it really good policy to give reformed criminals nine guns and 300 rounds of ammo?





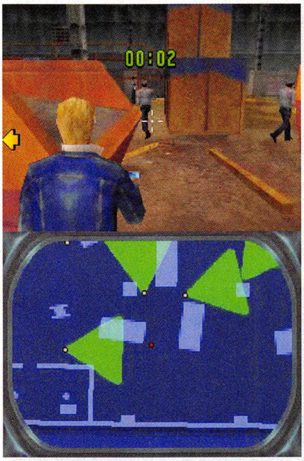


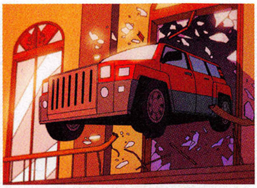
foot, but as soon as you draw your gun, the game switches to a stylus-only control scheme. Hop into a car, and you're back to buttons, which now have different functions entirely. With some missions lasting as little as 45 seconds, there isn't much time to acclimate yourself to the changes.

Grand Theft Game Design?

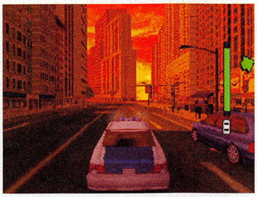
Comparisons to Grand Theft Auto are inevitable, and Abboud doesn't shy away from them. "We looked at other games, like GTA: Chinatown Wars, and set out to build something even better. We love and respect all the previous games in this genre, but after analyzing what these other games have done, we really aimed to push the envelope with C.O.P."

The developers' eagerness to cut straight to the car chases and gunplay may be their most striking innovation, but it isn't its only one. While a lot of the missions will feel familiar to GTA fans, the capabilities of the DS provide a few interesting twists. You can distract guards by yelling "Hey!" into the microphone, and use your stylus to manipulate security cameras or input door codes. Being a cop also opens the way for new gameplay possibilities: at times you'll lead squads of officers that you can deploy by dragging them into position on a touch-screen map, giving yourself a bit of help from NPC allies at the points where you think you'll need it most. Additionally, Dan will gain the ability to control certain aspects of the city, closing bridges to stop fleeing criminals and hijacking traffic cameras to ferret them out. In specific missions, you can even take a heroic turn by using a fire hose to douse flaming buses in the wake of a terrorist attack, or hop into a boat to help the coast guard collect dangerous jetsam before it hits the beaches. Dan Miles may be the most undersupervised police officer in the history of the force, but at least he's a sweet guy at heart.





[Above] It's not a crime thriller until someone drives through a plate-glass window.



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3. TIMING: Sweepstakes begins at 12:01 a.m. PDT on September 29, 2009 and continues until 11:59 p.m. PDT on November 15, 2009. Mailed entries must be postmarked by 11:59 p.m. PDT on November 22, 2009 to be eligible. Incomplete or late entries will not be accepted. HOW TO ENTER: Send a 3 x 5 postcard with your complete name, address, daytime telephone number, city, state, and zip code and email address (if you have one) to:
NINTENDO POWER MYSIMS AGENTS SWEEPSTAKES
4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080
There is a limit of one entry per eligible participant. Entries become the property of the Sponsors and will not be acknowledged or returned.

5. PRIZES AND ODDS: One (1) Grand Prize Package will be awarded. One (1) winner will receive their choice of either a Wii™ console or a Nintendo DSi™ system, a Wild Planet Super Mission Kit, plus a copy of the MySims™ Agents video game for Wii™ or Nintendo DS™. (total ARV: $459.93). The prizes are nontransferable and no substitutions will be allowed. Odds of winning shall be determined by the number of eligible entries received. Prizes are nontransferable and must be accepted as awarded. Winner will be responsible for all taxes (federal, state, and local) and all expenses not listed herein related to acceptance and use of any prize. Prize will be awarded if properly claimed. Limit one prize per household.

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4000 Shoreline Court, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080
Residents of the state of Vermont may omit return postage.

7. PRIVACY POLICY: Submissions are subject to standard privacy policy, the terms of which can be found at http://www.futureus.com/privacy.php, which terms and conditions entrants accept and agree to by submission of entries pursuant to these official rules.

8. RELEASE: by participating in the Sweepstakes and/or accepting a prize, a participant/winner agrees to defend, release and hold harmless the Sponsors and their respective parents, subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, advertising and promotion agencies, and the foregoing companies' officers, directors, shareholders, employees, representatives and agents (collectively "Releasees") from and against any actions, claims and/or liability for injury, loss or damage of any kind, (including the violation or infringement of any proprietary or personal right of any individual or entity) resulting in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, from participation in the Sweepstakes, and/or the use, acceptance, or possession of a Sweepstakes prize, and/or participation in a Sweepstakes prize-related activity, including any action, claim or liability arising from the unauthorized submission of any information. By participating in the Sweepstakes and/or accepting a prize, a participant/winner consents to and gives the Sponsors the right to use, publish, and display a winner's (and where applicable a participant's) name, city and state, and prize awarded, for the purpose of advertising, trade, publicity and promotional purposes in any media now known or hereafter discovered, worldwide, and on the Web, without review, notification or approval, all without additional consideration, unless prohibited by law.

9. CONDITIONS: Participants agree that by participating they release the Releasees from any liability in connection with: a) Entries that are ineligible as a result of being lost, late, illegible, damaged, incomplete, stolen, postage due, or misdirected: b) Any typographical or other human or technical errors in the offer or administration of the Sweepstakes, including but not limited to errors in advertising, these official rules, the selection and announcement of a winner(s), or the distribution/awarding of a prize(s); c) Any omission, interruption, deletion, defect, delay, misdirection, damage, injury, technical malfunctions or traffic congestion on the Internet/telephone network, or at any website, or any combination thereof. Sponsors reserve the right to modify these rules for clarification purposes without materially affecting the term and conditions of the Sweepstakes. In the event that the Sweepstakes is infected by a computer virus/worm, or is not capable of running or being executed as planned (as a result of but not limited to an error, omission, defect, delay, misdirection, tampering, unauthorized intervention, fraud, action of entrants, or technical failure) or any other cause which in the sole opinion of Sponsors corrupts or affects the administration, security, fairness, integrity, or proper conduct of the Sweepstakes, Sponsors reserve the right in their sole discretion to disqualify any suspect entry or entrant and to cancel, terminate, modify or suspend the Sweepstakes. In the event of such cancellation, termination, modification or suspension, notice thereof will be posted at the entry website(s) mentioned above, and winner(s) will be determined solely by Sponsors in a random drawing from among all eligible non-suspect and/or non-disqualified entries. In such event, Releasees shall have no liability to any participant who is disqualified due to such an action. Failure to enforce any term of these official rules shall not constitute a waiver of that provision.

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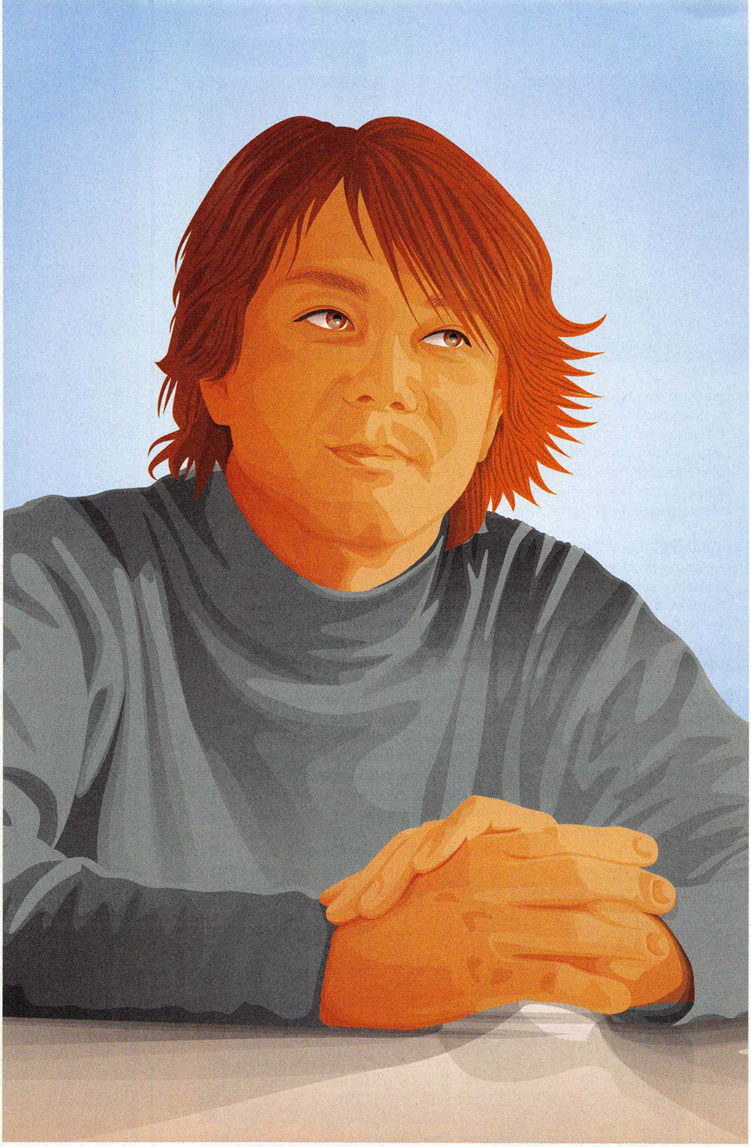
Power Profiles



DATE OF BIRTH
July 20, 1968

BIRTHPLACE
Omuta City, Fukuoka, Japan

POSITION
President, Level-5

BEST KNOWN FOR
Founding Level-5 and helping to create the Professor Layton games and a new generation of Dragon Quest titles

FAVORITE FOOD
Liver sashimi

CURRENT PROJECTS
All of Level-5's upcoming games, including Dragon Quest IX, Ninokuni, Fantasy Life, and White Knight Chronicles

Akihiro Hino

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRISTINA EMPEDOCLES

In just under a decade, Akihiro Hino went from being a programmer at a small studio named Riverhill Soft to founding Level-5, one of Japan's elite game developers. Even as the company's president he remains hands-on with the creation of every Level-5 title, and has served as a designer, producer, or director on some of the studio's landmark games. Starting with Dark Cloud on the PlayStation 2, Hino's titles have been known for their innovation and high production values, a combination that led Level-5 to take the reins of Japan's best-selling series, Dragon Quest. Although at first Hino created games exclusively for PlayStation platforms, he has shifted his company's focus to the Nintendo DS system with blockbusters such as Dragon Quest IX and the Professor Layton games, and more are on the way. He may not be a household name in North America just yet, but it's a safe bet that every serious gamer will know the name Akihiro Hino eventually.

NINTENDO POWER **How did you first become involved in the video game industry?**

AKIHIRO HINO I've liked PC games ever since I was little, and around the time I was in high school I learned how to make my own programs. At first, I was planning on being a systems engineer, and I had even gotten a job in that field. But when I played Dragon Quest III for the first time, I remember being thrilled in a way I never had been before. I thought it was amazing how much games could move people. And for that reason, I made the decision to move into the games industry.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Let's see. I wanted to be the owner of a model shop when I grew up. I looked up to the playful owner of the nearby model shop; I liked the way he would always try and make kids happy. If I get older and stop making games, I still might do that.

Why did you start an independent development studio, and what did that involve?

Before I set out on my own I was making fairly adult-oriented games and I preferred making games that kids would enjoy. That's why I wanted an environment where I could work on the games I wanted to make from the start, and went independent. Then we took the proposal for Dark Cloud, the first game we developed at Level-5, to Sony Computer Entertainment and they let us be in charge of development.

What is the guiding philosophy behind Level-5's games?

As the company name Level-5 suggests, we are dedicated to making five-star games. Also, a good game isn't something that you think is fun when you play it as much as it is something that gives off an aura that makes you want to play before you even touch it. We work hard to make games like that, and I think that is the secret to creating hit games.

Over the years, Level-5 has worked with a number of publishers. What do you think is the key to building such trusting relationships?

We have many publishers look at the products we have developed, and I think it is a result of their evaluation of those products. Also, I am very grateful that they understand the plans for games that Level-5 proposes and that we have opportunities to produce new products.

You are not only the president and CEO of Level-5, but you also work as the producer or development director on many of your own titles. How do you balance your duties between business and creative concepts?

The perspective as a company and the perspective from the game-making side are different, but I think the fact that I am doing both is part of Level-5's success. Whether I can keep the hit products coming is always at the back of my mind, even while I am planning games. That's why even in the planning stages, our products have a selling point.

Where did the idea for the Professor Layton games come from?

Originally, we had come up with a plan to make a game out of Professor Akira Tago's best-selling book, *Atama no Taiso* [*Exercises for the Mind*]. I was a big fan of *Atama no Taiso*, so I was working on a way to turn it into a game. The plan to make it into a puzzle game was progressing when the market for brain-training games exploded. If we had released a similar puzzle game, it would have been seen as just another one of many. I thought about a variety of ways to differentiate it from the other games on the market. As a result, I established a new genre called a puzzle-solving fantasy-adventure game, which combined puzzles with a story.

Why did you use English characters rather than Japanese ones?

In addition to thinking about the story, I thought about what kind of character would be an interesting lead. What came to mind at that time was the concept of a famous detective and his assistant, like Sherlock Holmes. The detective and assistant are pretty typical, so I thought it might be interesting if the assistant were a young boy—that's how Professor Layton and Luke were born. The decision to set the game in England was also greatly influenced by those English mystery novels.

Did you think that the Professor Layton series would be such a success? Why do you think players have shown so much interest?

At first, I never suspected

GAMEOGRAPHY

Since Akihiro Hino started Level-5, he has been in full creative control of every game his company has produced. He often serves as his games' lead designer, director, and producer in addition to running his company as president! Kind of makes us feel lazy....

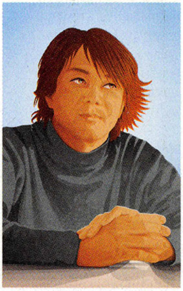
OVERBLOOD
1997, PLAYSTATION
LEAD PROGRAMMER

DARK CLOUD
2001, PLAYSTATION 2
LEAD DESIGNER, PRODUCER

DRAGON QUEST VIII: JOURNEY OF THE CURSED KING
2005, PLAYSTATION 2
DIRECTOR

ROGUE GALAXY
2007, PLAYSTATION 2
LEAD DESIGNER, PRODUCER, DIRECTOR

Power Profiles



that Professor Layton would be so widely loved. It was a completely new type of product, so I was excited to see how it would be received. I am sure players supported it because it has a different flavor than the puzzle games that came before it due to the gameplay, where the players themselves solve puzzles within the context of the story in order to progress. Also, I think we surprised players by showing them high-quality animation and voice work done by popular actors, which hadn't been done in DS games yet.

The Professor Layton games seem to appeal strongly to both core gamers and casual players. Was this something you were trying to achieve from the outset?

The Professor Layton series was developed with casual gamers in mind. When we made The Curious Village, our goal was to make a game that even mothers would enjoy. We made it so that only the stylus could be used so that people who don't usually play games could enjoy it right from the start without any confusion. Also, there is plenty for core gamers to enjoy, such as the developments in the epic story and the minigame mode you can play after beating the game.

What do you think of the split between hardcore games and casual games?

I think that both core games and causal games have interesting elements. We are already creating games for both core gamers and casual gamers at Level-5.

Level-5 titles have a reputation for emphasizing story elements. What is your opinion of games as a storytelling medium?

I also write the plans and scenarios for games myself, but personally, I don't intend to make games with any particular emphasis on story. If I think of a development that excites players, the story naturally gets richer. It is true, however, that we are not bound by convention and we work hard at making plans and stories.

Level-5 is one of the greatest success stories in recent years among Japanese publishers. What do you attribute this to?

The creative drive to always make things fun is the basis, and Level-5, with myself as a producer, has created games with a philosophy that the games should be fun and always stand out. In this environment where many fun games don't sell well, you must create and brand games to maximize their appeal to lead the project to success. Even if the game is fun, if you don't have an image of how to sell it, the project won't get off the ground. I think it is a combination of these things. Another reason for our success is that our staff works extremely hard.

> *"When I played Dragon Quest III for the first time, I remember being thrilled in a way I never had been before."*

What has changed in the game industry from the start of your career and now?

A lot of ideas have already been mined in the game industry and now planning games requires an extra level of effort. This does not mean people should make complicated games, but rather they should plan their product with their target audience in mind.

What is the aspect of game creation that you enjoy the most?

I make the framework for the promotional videos myself, and I really like making them while imagining the day we announce the title to the players.

What kind of process do you use to overcome getting stuck during game creation?

I don't feel like I've ever gotten stuck, but I always feel like I'm behind on my work.

Are there any games you admire (besides the products you have developed), or any game makers that you think highly of?

Dragon Quest III is a legendary game. Also, I think The Legend of Zelda is like a textbook for game design.

Are there any other works you admire in media besides games, like film or literature? What kind of things do you enjoy?

There are too many for me to name. Sorry.

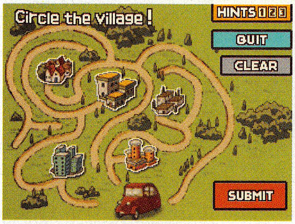
Do you have any hobbies or ways that you like to pass spare time?

Probably watching movies at home on DVD or Blu-ray. I also play games.

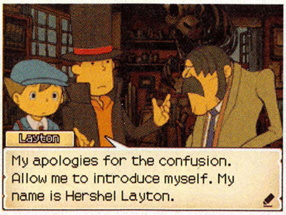
If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

The power to transcend time.

GAMEOGRAPHY

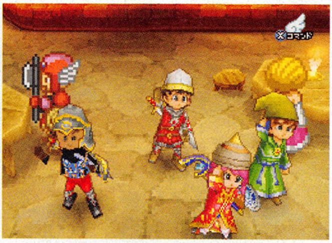


PROFESSOR LAYTON AND THE CURIOUS VILLAGE
2008, NINTENDO DS
LEAD DESIGNER, PRODUCER



My apologies for the confusion. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Hershel Layton.

PROFESSOR LAYTON AND THE DIABOLICAL BOX
2009, NINTENDO DS
LEAD DESIGNER, PRODUCER



DRAGON QUEST IX
TBD, NINTENDO DS
PRODUCER

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? OF THE WEEK
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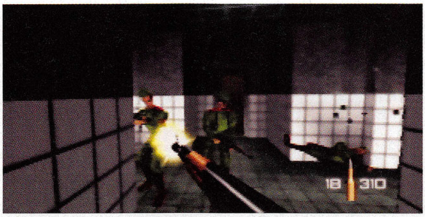
GOLDENEYE 007

GOLDENEYE 007

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO 64**
PUBLISHER: **NINTENDO**
DEVELOPER: **RARE**
RELEASE DATE: **AUGUST 1997**
COVERED IN ISSUES: **78, 80, 85, 92, 93, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 113, 115, 116, 121, 128, 133**
NUMBER OF X-MEN IN THE GAME: **2**

The best first-person shooters are shaken, not stirred.



Secret agents don't like drawing attention as they infiltrate enemy bases. Bond avoids being seen by running around and shooting dudes.

First-person shooters are ubiquitous on modern game consoles, but 12 years ago, the genre was mostly relegated to the PC. That began to change when Nintendo released the wildly popular GoldenEye 007 for the Nintendo 64.

When gamers first popped the game into their systems, they were treated to the classic James Bond theme playing over the traditional "007 shooting through a gun barrel" intro, letting you know that this was the real deal.

The game re-created and expanded on the plot of the 1995 film of the same name, but it wasn't content to be a simple shooter. Instead, it provided that secret-agent feel by introducing stealth elements and mission objectives to the gameplay. Players were rewarded for slipping through stages without alerting the enemy to their presence. On higher difficulty levels, the enemies weren't simply tougher, but more goals needed to be accomplished to clear the stage.

There were dozens of different weapons to choose from, and you'd undoubtedly find one or two that you preferred to use. Of course, Bond needs gadgets, and there were plenty here, ranging from a camera to a key analyzer to a superpowerful watch magnet. To boost replay value, a plethora of cheats could be unlocked by completing levels under a strict time limit.

As good as the single-player game was, what made GoldenEye so popular for so long was its fantastic multiplayer mode. Up to four people could compete in five different types of matches. Mixed in among the classic deathmatch and capture-the-flag games, the Man with the Golden Gun match had players competing for control of the iconic weapon, which could take down opponents with one shot. Sure, the matches had to be played via split screen, but the action was so fun and the maps were so well designed that we didn't mind squinting to see our portion of the game.

Advancements in the FPS genre have made GoldenEye seem fairly dated nowadays, but its place in history can't be denied. The game's fantastic design makes it still worth playing every once in a while. **—PHIL T.**

PICKED UP SOME AMMO.
21 328

Bond: Time to leave, Dr. Doak.
30 400

PICKED UP SOME AMMO.
575 22
22 575

I call this look "Blue Steel."

HENCHMEN FOR HIRE

There were more than 30 playable characters in GoldenEye's multiplayer mode (and dozens more if you count the secret Rare employee characters). Many of the characters were from the main game, but there were a few guest stars from previous James Bond films.

ODDJOB
Film: *Goldfinger*
This hat-tossing henchman is portrayed as being quite short in the game (he is of average height in the movie), so he is difficult to hit without careful aiming.

JAWS
Films: *The Spy Who Loved Me*, *Moonraker*
One of the few reoccurring henchmen in the Bond series, Jaws's trademark is his mouth full of powerful steel teeth.

MAYDAY
Film: *A View to a Kill*
This superstrong henchwoman turns on her boss and helps James Bond defeat him.

BARON SAMEDI
Film: *Live and Let Die*
This possibly supernatural character practices voodoo and has been called "the man who cannot die."

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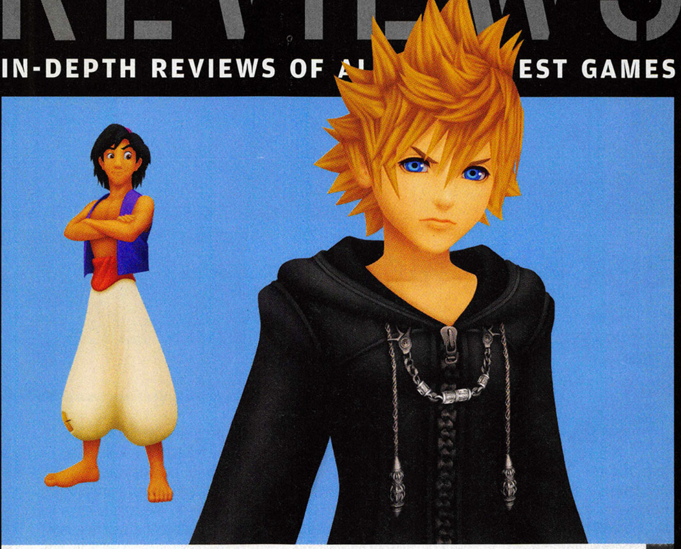
REVIEWS

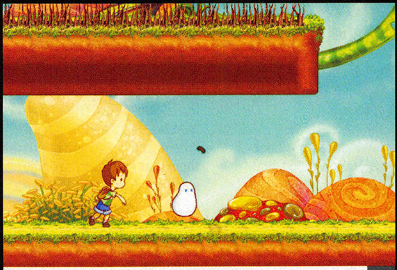
IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF AL EST GAMES

What do zippers, jellybeans, and capybaras have in common? They're all part of this month's epic reviews section. Your wallet may never be the same.



KINGDOM HEARTS 358/2 DAYS 78

DEAD SPACE EXTRACTION 84



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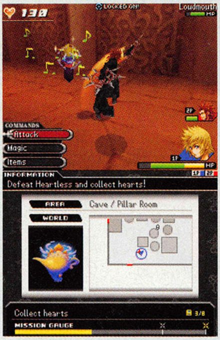
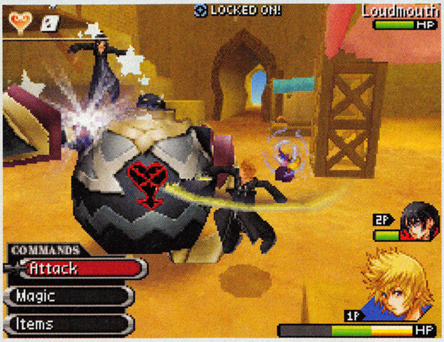
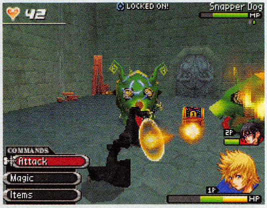

130
LOCKED ON!
Loudmouth
HP
2P
COMMANDS
Attack
Magic
Items
1P
INFORMATION
AREA
Cave / Pillar Room
WORLD
3/8
MISSION GAUGE

Defeat Heartless and collect hearts!

Collect hearts


8
LOCKED ON!
Loudmouth
HP
2P
COMMANDS
Attack
Magic
Items
1P
HP


42
LOCKED ON!
Snapper Dog
HP
2P
COMMANDS
Attack
Magic
Items
1P
HP

Magic Kingdom

KINGDOM HEARTS 358/2 DAYS

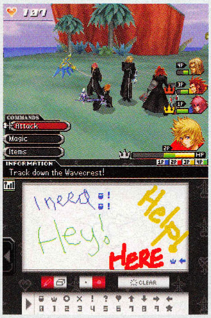
RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SQUARE ENIX**
DEVELOPER: **SQUARE ENIX/H.A.N.D.**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

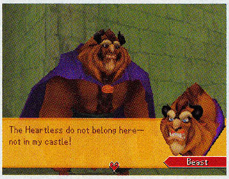
Obnoxious title aside, Kingdom Hearts 358/2 Days is a fantastic addition to this venerable franchise. It retains the core elements of its console brethren—combat-intensive 3-D gameplay, an ambitious narrative, and lots of Disney magic—while introducing thoughtful tweaks that help the game stand on its own. Square Enix has delivered some amazing software for Nintendo's dual-screened handheld, but this may be the publisher's greatest offering to date.

The story takes place between the original Kingdom Hearts and Kingdom Hearts II. For the first time, though, series hero Sora is not the game's central figure. Instead, things revolve around Roxas and the previously untold events of his time with Organization XIII. Given how complex the saga's plot has become, further synopsis would likely prove fruitless. The game itself does an admirable job of trying to bring newcomers up to speed, but its tale will definitely resonate much more strongly with fans. We get to see what happened "behind the scenes" during Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories, for instance, and knowing what becomes of Roxas in Kingdom Hearts II makes us more sympathetic to the Organization's cause. At times, you have to stop and remind yourself that you're rooting against the good guys.

Though its overall scope is massive, the adventure is divided into days, and at the start of each one, you're assigned a mission. These range from performing reconnaissance to hunting certain types of Heartless (the shadowy creatures that serve as the primary threat in Kingdom Hearts), and they break the quest into bite-sized chunks ideal for portable gaming. As always, your travels take you to worlds from an assortment of classic Disney films, from *Aladdin* to *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. The game's presentation upholds series tradition, as well, with hardware-defying visuals, stunning CG cutscenes, and a moving soundtrack. The critic in me wants to decry the fact that most of the music is recycled from previous installments, but it's hard to complain when it's this good, and the familiarity provides a certain emotional shorthand that's very effective.


187
4P
3P
2P
COMMANDS
Attack
Magic
Items
1P
HP
INFORMATION
I need
Hey!
Help!
HERE
CLEAR

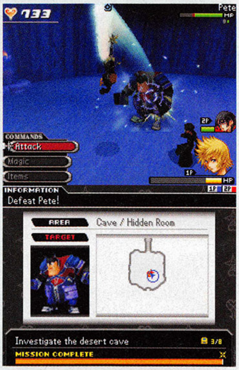
Track down the Wavecrest!



The Heartless do not belong here—not in my castle!

If I do have one complaint about 358/2 Days, it's that the game takes a little while to pick up steam. The first few hours are extremely easy, and combat seems repetitive as a result. When the difficulty starts to ramp up, however, you're forced to take advantage of your full repertoire, and the genius of the game's unique character-development system becomes evident. By that point, you'll be far too engrossed to hold a grudge against those early chapters.

Between the lengthy single-player quest, optional objectives, Holo-Mission challenges, and robust multiplayer mode, 358/2 Days certainly isn't lacking for content. Up to four players can participate in the multiplayer shenanigans, which combine cooperative and competitive aspects à la The Legend of Zelda: Four Swords. They're not quite as much fun as that title's, but nor do they feel like some tacked-on extra. If you're playing with the right group of friends, they can be pretty addictive (especially since doing well will earn you rewards back in Story mode). It's just a shame that the multiplayer options are limited to local wireless only.


133
Pete
HP
2P
COMMANDS
Attack
Magic
Items
1P
HP
INFORMATION
AREA
Cave / Hidden Room
TARGET
3/8
MISSION COMPLETE

Defeat Pete!

Investigate the desert cave

What truly makes this a Kingdom Hearts title, however, is the tale of friendship that lies at its center. After each mission, Roxas joins fellow Organization members Axel and Xion for ice cream, and he forms a bond with them that grows increasingly significant over the course of a heart-wrenching tale. For all its intricate plot threads, the game is at its best during these little character moments. **—STEVE T.**

WRITERS' BLOCK

WHAT'S THE SCARIEST MOMENT YOU'VE EXPERIENCED WHILE PLAYING A VIDEO GAME?

Justin Cheng

While playing JU-ON: The Grudge for last issue's preview, I jumped out of my seat a bit whenever a ghost popped up out of nowhere.

Chris Hoffman

There's a part in Super NES action-RPG Soul Blazer when the music drops out and this dog proclaims he's gonna eat you. I hadn't saved my game in a while and I thought it was game over, but it turns out he's just joking.

Casey Loe

The sanity effects in Eternal Darkness that made you think your TV or GameCube had shut off were the worst. Those got me every darn time.

Chris Shepperd

When you're in the village and you hear the chainsaw fire up off screen.... Yeah, Resident Evil 4 wins.

Chris Slate

Resident Evil 2 made me jump the highest, when the Licker came through the two-way mirror in the interrogation room.

David F. Smith

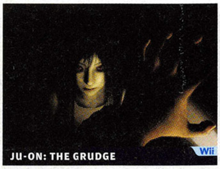
When I accidentally forgot to hold in reset while turning the power off on the NES. I was scared to death I'd lost my Legend of Zelda save.

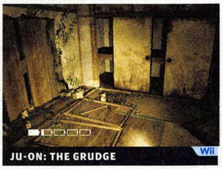
Phil Theobald

Everyone knows that the scariest moment in gaming came when you encountered Jason in Friday the 13th for the NES.

Steve Thomason

The first time a Crimson Head rose up and sprinted toward me in the GameCube version of Resident Evil, I squealed like a little girl.





JU-ON: THE GRUDGE

RATING: 6.0

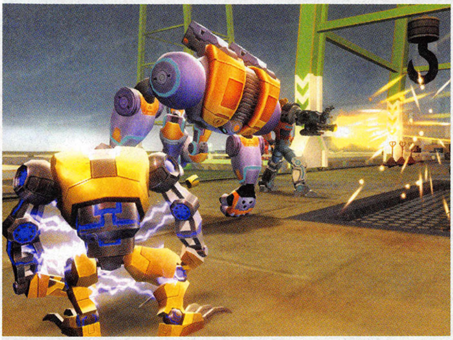
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **XSEED**
DEVELOPER: **FEELPLUS**
ESRB: **MATURE**

JU-ON: The Grudge gets its atmosphere very right. There's never been a game that better captured the feelings of dread and uncertainty that the characters in ghost movies must be feeling.

It breaks from gaming conventions in various ways, the most notable being that the gameplay involves you, in a scary location, with nothing but a flashlight. That's it. No weapons, no health bar, no inventory. You're a character in a horror movie, totally at the mercy of what the game's designers have planned for you.

They do guide you along a very scripted path in each level, whether it's a run-down factory or a deserted hospital. Once you've gone through them, you'll know where the scares happen, so the game is kind of a one-off experience. Needing to find batteries for your flashlight, lest it go dark and you die, also isn't so great. Sure, it introduces an element of urgency, but it's frustrating when you just can't find what you need.

This isn't a deep experience by any means, and for most it'll be something to play a bit of and never touch again. But it deserves credit for delivering some of the most genuinely scary gaming moments ever. —RANDY N.



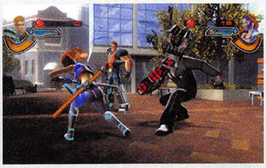
Metal Masher

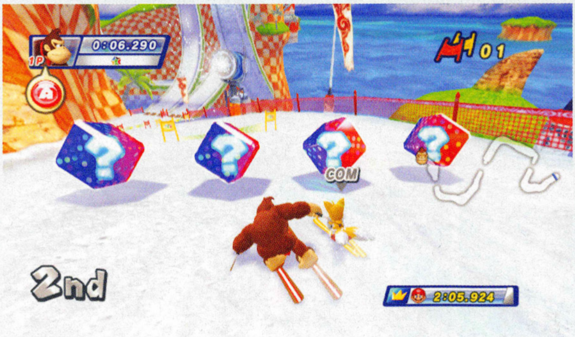
SPYBORGS

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **CAPCOM**
DEVELOPER: **BIONIC GAMES**
ESRB: **TEEN**

It's been a long time since games like Double Dragon and Final Fight ruled the gaming roost, but Spyborgs proves that arcade-style beat-'em-ups can still provide some solid, fist-flying fun. One of the best parts about the game is its emphasis on co-op action; you've always got a partner at your side (you can tag between them in single-player mode, with competent AI controlling whoever you're not), all special moves are designed around a cooperative component, and health is even distributed to your partner if you grab a pickup when your life meter is full. Spyborgs also improves upon the genre with spy vision (the ability to reveal hidden objects via the Wii Remote controller's pointer function) and character-specific upgrades for extra health, enhanced strength, and the like. The developers have done a bang-up job on the boss fights, too; even though there aren't many of them, these well-designed, multipart, pattern-based encounters rank among the best boss fights I've seen in years. These features, however, don't prevent Spyborgs from falling into some of the traps of this type of game. The action does get repetitive, especially since you have only a few combos and, despite the upgrade system, only a handful of moves. There are no throws, and since special moves are meter-based, you'll find yourself relying on the same button-mashing attacks for most of the game. Some of the control choices are odd, too; I can't understand why you can execute special moves only when you're guarding. On the other hand, the inclusion of both motion-based and traditional controls is much appreciated, and the game looks quite impressive. Spyborgs may not revitalize its genre, but it makes a respectable effort. —CHRIS H.





0:23.744
COM
COM
1st
2:20.000

Good, But No Gold

1P
18.880pts
Backside 360°
40.000pt(s)

MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

RATING: **7.0**

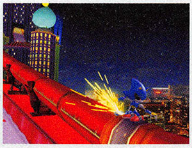
PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

When Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games released in 2007, the idea of gaming's top two icons sharing the same box art was enough to set our fanboy pulses racing—the fact that the game was pretty good was just a nice bonus. But after two years (and countless cathartic plumber-hedgehog showdowns in Super Smash Bros. Brawl), we expect more from the sequel. And while Olympic Winter Games is slightly better in some ways, it's slightly worse in others, resulting in an overall experience that is very much the same.

The game is handicapped straight away for being based on winter games. That might sound like an unfair criticism—and I don't mean to put down sports like speed skating, bobsleigh, and curling—but I've never seen most winter events translated into a superfun video game. Mario & Sonic does as good a job as any title ever has, and when played one after the other in quick snack-sized sessions, the events are fun enough. But for me—and, I suspect, most people—summer sports make for more interesting video games. There was certainly a wider variety of experiences in the first Mario & Sonic, with sports as diverse as archery, gymnastics, swimming, shooting, track, and javelin throw. Conversely, while playing through the main career-type mode of Olympic Winter Games, it seems like you're either skiing or skating most of the time, both of which play similarly.

Sega must have recognized this problem, because the game, thankfully, adds on 12 Dream Events, which—as in the last game—present tricked-out, over-the-top versions of sports where full Mario- and Sonic-ness can be unleashed. My biggest smiles came from skating laps around a version of Mario Kart's Mario Circuit track (while hurling red and green shells at other racers), ski-jumping through space in a Super Mario Galaxy-themed stage, and playing other such goofed-up scenarios. Dream Events are more complex than the fairly shallow, straight-laced Olympic sports, and they provide the game's best multiplayer action.

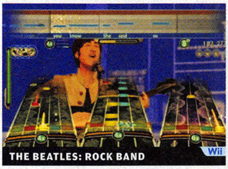
Like the first Mario & Sonic, Olympic Winter Games focuses almost entirely on motion controls, which is both a good and a bad thing. The motions match the onscreen actions well and are never clunky, but the game often requires precise timing, and a wave of the Wii Remote will never be as accurate as a button press. And although many events offer the option to plug in a Nunchuk controller, the peripheral usually makes things needlessly more complicated without adding any worthwhile degree of extra control. This isn't a problem, however, since the remote-only option works just fine. Serious players will also avoid using the Wii Balance Board accessory when going for gold. It's not badly implemented—it's one of the better uses we've seen for the peripheral, actually—but unless you're a gymnast, a ninja, or Spider-Man, your balance probably won't net you as many medals as your wrist skills will.



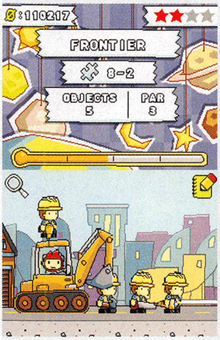
The game includes a healthy number of playable characters and extras, which range from boring (a library of Olympic Games trivia) to mildly interesting (a music player) to cool (Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection event rankings) to supercool (shops that let you trick out your equipment and your Mii). The best goodies are costumes for your Mii that are based on characters in the game, although the unbeatable awesomeness of seeing your head poking out from Mario's overalls will render the main catalog of normal hats, gloves, boots, etc. pretty worthless.

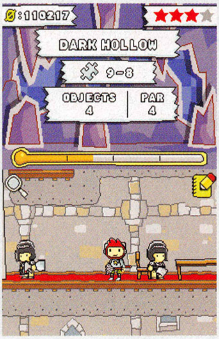
Despite my gripes, Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games is a solid title. I'm still waiting for the series to live up to the full potential of both the top-class team-up of its stars and the companies behind it, but in the meantime, there's still good fun to be had. **—CHRIS SL.**

THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND


THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND

MINI NINJAS
Fireball
x58
DS





THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND

RATING: 9.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **MTV GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **HARMONIX/PI STUDIOS**
ESRB: **TEEN**

If you're a fan of the Fab Four, The Beatles: Rock Band is unquestionably a must-buy. It's simply awesome to gather some friends and assume the roles of John, Paul, George, and Ringo, playing through some of the highlights of their legendary careers (*The Ed Sullivan Show*, Shea Stadium, Abbey Road Studios, and more). And although you can use plastic instruments that you might already own from prior Rock Band or Guitar Hero games, I prefer the new Beatles guitars. This is mainly due to convenience; you can calibrate your equipment by holding the guitar in front of your TV, which makes it a snap to start jamming. In fact, the ease of entry is a big reason why The Beatles: Rock Band succeeds. Those who already know how to play this type of rhythm game can start playing the band's greatest hits right away; those who are new to the genre can get a handle on the basics pretty quickly. (Naturally, the No Fail option makes things even easier.)

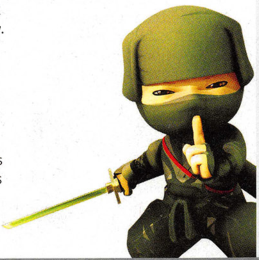
If you're not a Beatles fan, however, this game won't change your mind; unlike other band-centric titles that feature other band's songs, this one is all Beatles all the time. But I think that it's this all-encompassing Beatlesness—in both the game's presentation and soundtrack—that makes The Beatles: Rock Band so, well, fab. **—JUSTIN C.**

MINI NINJAS

RATING: 6.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
DEVELOPER: **MAGIC POCKETS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

It's a guilty feeling to pick apart a game such as Mini Ninjas, a title that does quite a few things right but a lot of things wrong. You play primarily as a cute little ninja, charged with the task of protecting a village from an onslaught of samurai. The story plays out through a variety of fitting environments and charming dialogue. But the solid premise is undone by boring game mechanics, especially during combat. Even with a variety of potentially cool weapons such as shuriken and smoke bombs, your only real choice is to hack away at the enemies with your puny sword. The exploration parts are aggravating, too—poor camera controls make even walking around a chore. It's a cute game, but too many issues make Mini Ninjas less fun than it should be. **—CHRIS SH.**



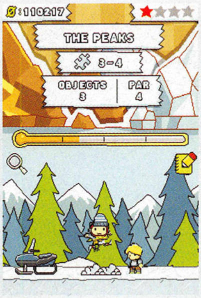
Yes, You Can

SCRIBBLENAUTS

RATING: 9.0

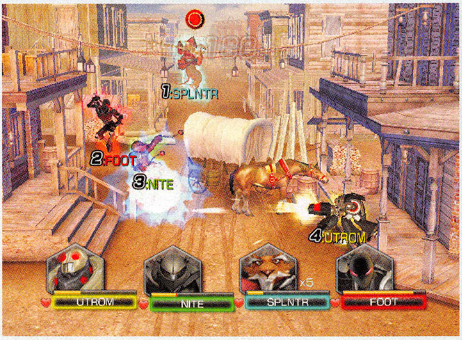
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **WARNER BROS. INTERACTIVE**
DEVELOPER: **5TH CELL**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

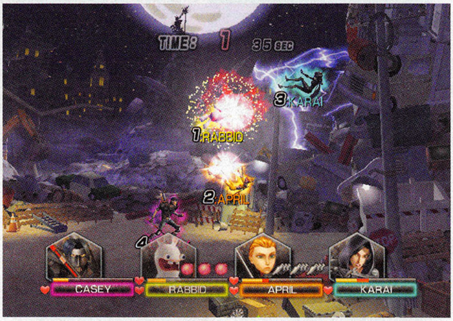
Scribblenauts is, in a word, amazing. The game truly delivers on its promise to let you create virtually anything by writing it. From angels to mutants, clams to capybaras, flamethrowers to thunderclouds, if you can think of it, you can probably create it in Scribblenauts. The result is a game that's unlike anything you've experienced before, and one in which you can spend literally hours just fooling around, creating objects and characters, and watching them interact, not even progressing the game yet still loving every minute of it. And despite all the freedom and power you're given, it doesn't break the game; the title is surprisingly challenging throughout its more than 200 levels.



That's not to say there aren't chinks in the armor. You'll definitely find words that aren't recognized, and things often don't work out quite the way you intend them to. There are also times when solutions that seem clear (such as using a bridge to cross a pit) won't work because of irritating restrictions (bridges are ridiculously short), and times when your actions cause you to lose for no apparent reason—generally because there's some hidden parameter the game doesn't tell you about. And then there's the camera; it snaps back to your main character after a few seconds, which is pretty annoying when you're trying to accomplish a task elsewhere in a stage.

These annoyances, however, amount to precious little. Any frustration quickly melts away to pure enjoyment once you've moved on to the next stage, and any flaws are easily forgiven. This might be the most creative game I've ever played, and you owe it to yourself to check it out.
—CHRIS H.





Backup Brawl

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: SMASH-UP

RATING: 7.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **GAME ARTS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Smash-Up has been promoted as TMNT-meets-Super Smash Bros. (the game even goes so far as to include "Smash" in its title), but I was still surprised to discover just how similar it is. Developer Game Arts (which helped create Super Smash Bros. Brawl) has stuck to Nintendo's formula so closely that even the smallest details of the character-select, fighting introduction, and victory screens are nearly identical. If you ever dreamed of hearing the Brawl announcer (or a close likeness) shout "Leonardo!" at the beginning of a fight, then your time has come.

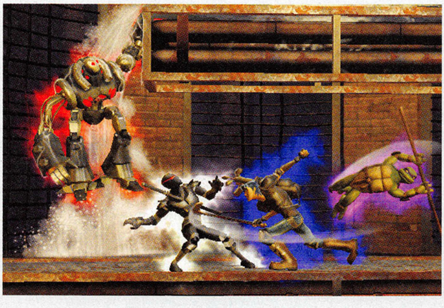
Don't get me wrong—I'm not knocking the game for being a copycat. Since only three Super Smash Bros. titles have been released in over nine years—and no one else has made a serious effort to emulate the series—this frantic, four-player style of fighting is far from being played out. The only negative aspect of copying Super Smash Bros. so closely is that Smash-Up can't avoid a direct comparison with what some consider Nintendo's best franchise. And as fun as Smash-Up is, it pales in comparison.

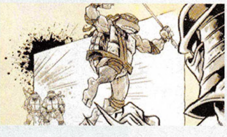
The main difference is that Smash-Up doesn't come close to matching Brawl's sheer amount of content. A part of Brawl's appeal is that you are constantly trying, unlocking, and experiencing new things, but in Smash-Up you can see everything the game has to offer relatively quickly. Another problem is that no one world of characters can hope to match the appeal of an army of Nintendo all-stars. TMNT is one of the few brands that could single-handedly carry a game like this, but its roster still manages only six or seven compelling characters and drops off sharply after that (only die-hard shell-heads are likely to master a guy like Foot Soldier).

Nonetheless, the game really makes an admirable attempt at mimicking a classic. The core gameplay compares well, with tight controls, inventive and interactive stages, and multiple play modes that include varied mission challenges and a story-driven arcade mode. (Regarding the latter, however, it must be said that the game's black-and-white comic-book-style cut-scenes look amateurish compared to the top-notch CG cinemas in Brawl.) You can play with just the Wii Remote, the Wii Remote plus Nunchuk, the Classic Controller, or—my favorite—a GameCube controller, all of which can be configured however you like. We weren't able to compete online in time for this review, but if Smash-Up can provide a steady connection at a fairly solid frame rate, then it may best Brawl in at least one important category.

While the game sticks to Brawl's blueprints pretty closely, it does slip in a few features that are all its own. It's fun to wall-jump into a diving attack, swing off a pole into a flying jump-kick, and swap characters in the heat of battle. The game also includes several original bonus games that challenge players to snag the most pizza, dodge flying daggers, race across a series of platforms, and more. You can assemble figurines of the game's fighters by winning parts in a shooting gallery, and even build your own trophies to put up for grabs in multiplayer match-ups.

Smash-Up isn't likely to replace Brawl as anyone's primary four-player fighting game, but it offers a nice, if slight, change of pace and does a good job representing the storied history of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. It's a must for fans of the turtles and a good bet for anyone who enjoys a fun multiplayer game. **—CHRIS SL.**





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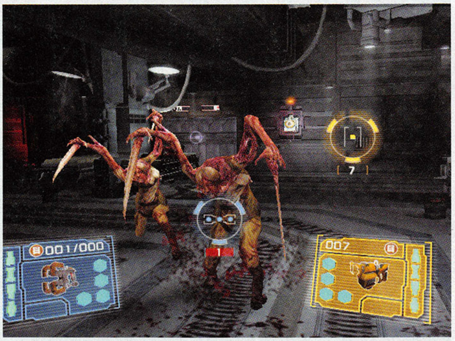
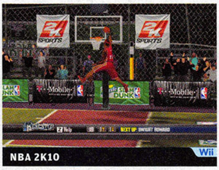
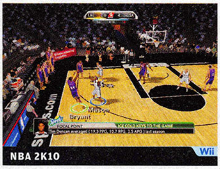
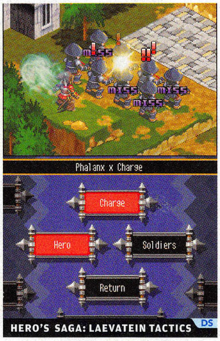








Dead On

DEAD SPACE EXTRACTION

RATING: **8.0**

PLATFORM: **WII**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EUROCOM/VISCERAL GAMES**
ESRB: **MATURE**

Stranding players on a deserted starship, last year's Dead Space (for PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360) offered a unique take on the survival-horror genre and earned rave reviews for its high level of polish and its deeply unsettling ambience. Those same qualities carry over to this Wii-exclusive prequel. Despite the switch to a "guided experience" (EA's term for a light-gun shooter), Dead Space Extraction isn't some half-hearted spin-off; a lot of care has obviously gone into crafting a top-notch presentation. And a happy side effect of keeping the action on rails is that it allows the developers to frame each moment for maximum tension. The result is incredibly immersive, and these folks aren't afraid to push the envelope when it comes to creeping you out.

Extraction may also be the first light-gun game to make you legitimately care about its story. You play as a number of different protagonists throughout, and their varying perspectives lead to some surprising twists. Moreover, the game employs impressively emotive facial animations and superb voice work to invest you in the fate of its characters. After all, horror is always more effective when you give a darn about those in peril. Fans of the original game will love how the stories tie together, but Extraction's narrative definitely stands on its own and should prove compelling regardless of your prior exposure to the franchise.

So how's the shooting? Pretty darn satisfying. As in the original game, there's a big focus on "strategic dismemberment," and you'll find a wide assortment of weapons well suited to the task. The lack of monster variety is disappointing, but the game does throw in lots of little diversions (repairing an electrical circuit, for instance, or feverishly bolting a makeshift barrier) to mix things up.

Kudos to EA for bringing this Mature-rated franchise to Wii and for putting some real effort behind it. Don't let the "guided experience" label scare you. Leave that to the monsters.
—STEVE T.

NBA 2K10

RATING: **6.0**

PLATFORM: **WII**
PUBLISHER: **2K SPORTS**
DEVELOPER: **VISUAL CONCEPTS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

The legendary NBA 2K franchise makes its Wii debut this season, and like the stellar NHL 2K10, it's an impressively robust package. In addition to the usual assortment of Franchise and Career modes, it offers full online play for up to 10 players, plus downloadable roster updates, online leagues, and NBA Today, which lets you play along with the real scheduled NBA games. You've also got NBA Blacktop, featuring a bevy of streetball competitions like 3-point shootouts and dunk contests. A number of NBA legends are included as well, so you can finally determine who truly dominates above the rim: LeBron James or Dominique Wilkins.

Unfortunately, the game stumbles pretty badly once you actually step foot on the court. Poorly implemented motion controls make the action needlessly complicated, and they often feel unresponsive. NHL 2K10 was much more selective about how it used the Wii Remote, and was a better game for it. Why the folks at Visual Concepts didn't take a page from their own playbook is mystifying. (Though they do offer the option to use the Classic Controller.) Graphically, things are an even bigger mess, with blocky character models, inconsistent animation, and lots of visual glitches. At least Kevin Harlan and Clark Kellogg do a nice job on commentary.

The primary focus for this rookie effort was obviously ensuring that the Wii game included all of the same features as its counterparts on competing consoles. And that's to be applauded, especially since 2K's early Wii efforts were terribly pared down. But on the gameplay front, NBA 2K has a lot of work to do before its sophomore season. **—STEVE T.**

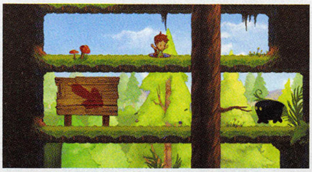
HERO'S SAGA: LAEVATEIN TACTICS

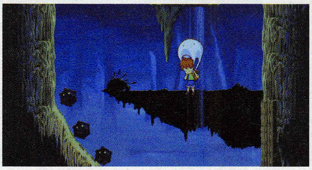
RATING: **7.0**

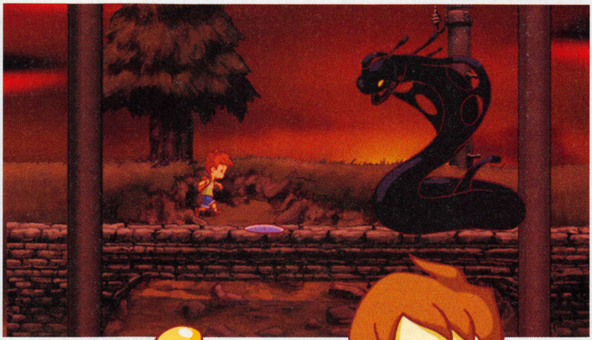
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **AKSYS GAMES**
DEVELOPER: **ALTAIR**
ESRB: **TEEN**

There are two ways to win the confrontations in Hero's Saga. You can carefully plan your strategy, weigh all the factors (like equipment and formation and terrain), and grind out a victory through superior tactics. Alternatively, you can game the Valhalla Gauge. Maxing out a unit's gauge in this strategy-RPG lets that unit launch a supremely powerful one-shot-kill attack, which is often enough to turn an entire battle's tide.

This isn't fatally unbalancing, but it feels weird to take an objective with essentially one move. The bad guys can do it too, which sometimes leads to sudden, infuriating defeats. Genre fans should still give this Saga a look—it has some very well-designed stages, and a fine English script by Aksys—but be warned that your best-laid strategies might go south at the worst possible moment.
—DAVID S.







To Bean or Not to Bean

A BOY AND HIS BLOB

RATING: 8.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **MAJESCO**
DEVELOPER: **WAYFORWARD**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

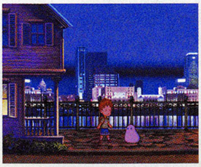
The first word that comes to mind when you play A Boy and His Blob is *beautiful*. The game looks absolutely stunning. The rich, hand-drawn 2-D graphics are extraordinarily detailed, and the character animation is second to none; backgrounds are vibrant, multilayered, and full of visual flourishes. Colorful butterflies hover in fields of lush vegetation; stone walls seem to be built from individually crafted stones; intricate machinery spins and whirs; majestic limestone formations turn ominous caverns into works of art; alien plant life is foreign yet inviting with its Willy Wonka-esque aesthetic. Amazing lighting effects—among the best ever seen in a 2-D game—also add to the visual appeal, and an enchanting musical score further helps set the mood. If there was ever a game that fits the bill of "cartoon come to life," this is it.

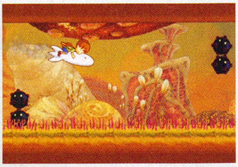
The second word A Boy and His Blob evokes is *refreshing*. Despite being based on a classic NES title, this Wii update feels unlike anything else released in the last 20 years. The puzzle-platformer formula is nothing new, but the idea of a young boy partnered with a blob that can transform into various tools (a cannon, a parachute, an anvil, a protective bubble, a ladder, a trampoline, a rocket, a coconut, etc.) determined by the jellybeans that you feed it isn't exactly a concept you see every day. Though you're automatically given specific types of jellybeans for each level (which means you're always prepared for the task at hand), there's still ample opportunity to use the tools to creatively overcome the obstacles and enemies before you.

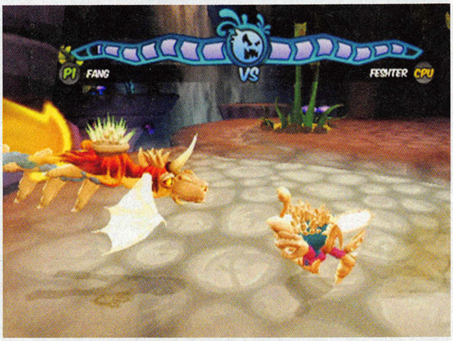
As unique as the concept is, the presentation is equally novel. This is a very subtle game; most games try to beat you over the head with flashy cut-scenes, but this title wins you over with charm and sophistication. There's no life meter, no lives counter, no level names, no voiceovers, no script, no dialogue, and no save screen (it autosaves; don't worry). In some games that could be a detriment, but in A Boy and His Blob it works; the story is convincingly told purely through its animation, and despite its minimalist approach, you can absolutely feel the emotional bond between the boy and the blob, just as much as you could feel the relationship between the protagonist and Yorda in renowned PlayStation 2 title Ico. The emotional impact comes to the forefront especially in the game's excellent closing stages, in which the tale goes from tragic to empowering in a matter of seconds.

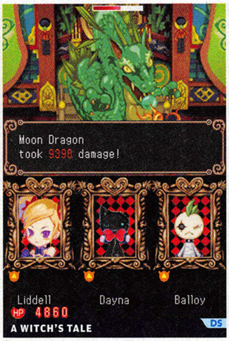
Another word that comes to mind: *challenging*. Although most gamers should be able to get through the first half of the game without much trouble and the second half with a little persistence, obtaining all the hidden treasures in each stage and conquering the subsequently unlocked bonus levels (which focus mainly on using a single type of jellybean) is no easy task. With approximately 80 levels, this is a big game; although it starts slow as it introduces you to your abilities, both the puzzles and the platforming get fairly tough by the end of the game.

The final—and perhaps most important—word that's synonymous with A Boy and His Blob is *fun*. Like a Disney movie, this is a game that can be enjoyed on multiple levels and by players of all ages. It's a magical adventure full of mesmerizing sights and compelling gameplay, held together by whimsical characters and a simple but surprisingly powerful story. There are even numerous nods to the original NES game to please old-school fans. If you're up for something off the beaten path, look no further than A Boy and His Blob. **—CHRIS H.**

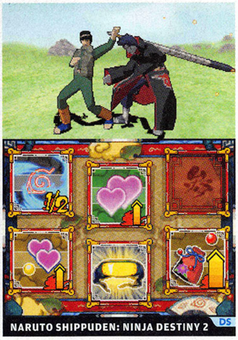








A WITCH'S TALE



NARUTO SHIPPUDEN: NINJA DESTINY 2

How to Build a Hero

SPORE HERO

RATING: **7.0**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **MAXIS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

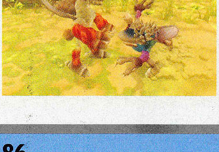
Though the original Spore seems to be too complicated for any non-PC platform, a long-promised spin-off of the ambitious title has come to Wii in the form of Spore Hero, with some charm intact.

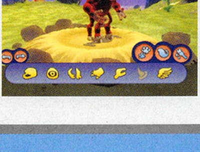
The campaign revolves around a red comet and a blue comet landing on a strange planet. The red one is out to control the googly-eyed inhabitants, while the blue one hatches the player character to stop it. You make the hero with a slightly trimmed version of the elaborate Spore Creature Creator from the PC game, and the slow reveal of new parts gained during play helps you get used to continually changing your creature.

Spore Hero works like your standard adventure game: as you search for items to combat the red menace, you stop to help with side quests. But in a break from adventure-game convention, getting to previously unreachable areas requires not a new item, but a new part to put on your creature. It's a cute touch, though some players may become too attached to the look of their guy to want to add a new part, even if the adventure demands it.

The one weak link is the combat, which happens in a separate arena and is frequent enough to be frustrating. Using the Wii Remote and Nunchuk, you often flail around imprecisely to do attacks, and timing your defensive moves is very tricky due to the simple nature of the fighting.

Some inoffensive minigames add flavor, and the chance to battle another player and their monster in a separate game mode, plus your own Sporepedia, should keep you coming back. The game may be too easy for some, but this spin-off adventure made it to Wii mostly unscathed. **—HENRY G.**





A WITCH'S TALE

RATING: **4.0**

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **NIS AMERICA**
DEVELOPER: **HITMAKER**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Originally intended as an action-RPG, A Witch's Tale was converted into a standard role-playing game late in development, with disastrous consequences. The game's large areas now feel pointless and empty, and the random encounters, while relatively infrequent, are simply awful. A Witch's Tale uses a copy of the bog-standard Dragon Quest battle system, but every fight takes 10 times as long as DQ's due to painfully slow pacing and enemies that have ridiculous amounts of hit points. Even random encounters against low-level enemies can take several minutes to clear, and you can't even zone out and mash buttons, since the game employs a stylus-only control scheme for no apparent reason.

The only thing A Witch's Tale has going for it is a unique and attractive art style that owes more to *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and American indie comics than it does to the usual Japanese anime aesthetic. But while the visuals and story of A Witch's Tale seem intended for preteen girls, the game's open structure and total lack of guidance would make it excessively confusing for beginning gamers and young audiences. Meanwhile, experienced role-players will be just as put off by the tedious pacing and unimaginative mechanics. As cute as A Witch's Tale is, its weak gameplay and slopped-together feel aren't likely to be appreciated by anyone. **—CASEY L.**

NARUTO SHIPPUDEN: NINJA DESTINY 2

RATING: **7.0**

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **TOMY**
DEVELOPER: **DREAM FACTORY**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Destiny 2 does what any good sequel should: it improves upon its predecessor in every respect. This 3-D fighter looks better, has a bigger roster, and offers more modes that give it more longevity (the RPG/dungeon-crawler-style Quest mode in particular). The combat is still as simplistic and button-mashy as it was in the original Ninja Destiny, but it's fun nonetheless, due in part to the fast and furious pace at which it moves. One notable new addition is the ability to wander around the Hidden Leaf Village between missions. Unfortunately, there's not much to do once you're there other than running to get another task. **—JUSTIN C.**

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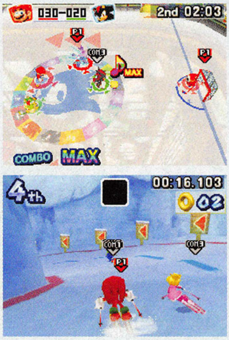
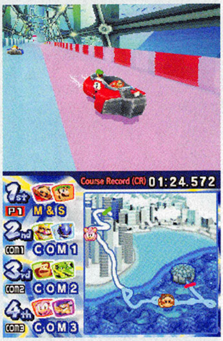
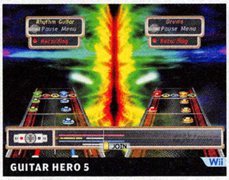
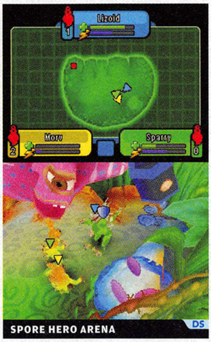
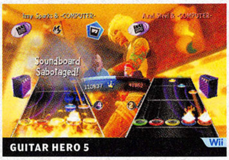





GUITAR HERO 5 Wii



SPORE HERO ARENA DS



GUITAR HERO 5 Wii

Snow Joy

MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

RATING: 8.0

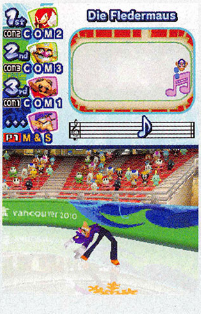
PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **SEGA**
DEVELOPER: **SEGA**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

If you've played the original Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games on the Nintendo DS, then you know what to expect from this winter variant. Once again the two video game icons (and a bunch of their pals) take a break from saving their respective worlds to participate in international sporting competition.

Events are controlled through extensive button-tapping or rapid, well-timed swipes of the stylus. With over two dozen events to choose from, there is some varying quality. Many of the games are enjoyable, but some don't work as well (the stylus-driven hockey just isn't much fun). In addition to the standard Olympic events, Dream events put a more fantastic spin on the games. The snowboarding/Mario Kart hybrid is especially cool.

The meat of the single-player experience is in Adventure Tours mode. Here Mario and Sonic team up to track down Bowser and Dr. Eggman, who are planning on ruining the Winter Olympics by kidnapping the Snow Sprites that create the snow necessary for the games. This quest is fairly simple and really just a hub to play the standard events, but the presentation, which has you collecting athletic gear and finding new party members, is a lot of fun.

Although there is support for up to four players from one cartridge, the lack of online play is a bummer. Wi-Fi is used only to download high scores from around the world, but you must tediously download the scores for each event separately. Despite this, Mario and Sonic's second portable outing together is a good time. —**PHIL T.**



GUITAR HERO 5

RATING: 8.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ACTIVISION**
DEVELOPER: **VICARIOUS VISIONS**
ESRB: **TEEN**

Is Guitar Hero 5 worth playing if you already own Guitar Hero World Tour? Yes; although the titles offer similar experiences, Guitar Hero 5 offers more than a few upgrades. I'm not talking about just the song list (although that has been updated with a wide array of mostly great tracks); I'm talking about pretty much every facet of the game. The graphics, for instance, are noticeably improved, and the gameplay feels more difficult than that of World Tour. Additionally, some new features help improve the overall experience. For example, there are no longer separate Career paths for each instrument; you progress through one big Career mode in which you can swap instruments as you see fit. (It pays to switch things up, too, as the songs have either an instrument-specific or a full-band bonus challenge.) Additionally, you and your friends can all play the same instrument, which makes it easier for a group of guitar/bass-only players (read: most of the NP staff) to rock out together. And I like the fact that developer Vicarious Visions made use of Wii-to-DS connectivity with the entertaining Roadie Battle mode, in which a buddy plays minigames on the DS to sabotage your opponent(s). True, these are not revolutionary additions, but they are appreciated refinements. —**JUSTIN C.**

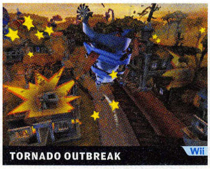
SPORE HERO ARENA

RATING: 5.0

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **MAXIS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Spore Hero Arena has a few of the most interesting bits of the original Spore. The question is whether it has enough of them. This version boils down the game into a 3-D action-adventure, and it's not badly done, but it's a little limited.

Hero Arena includes a powerful take on Spore's signature creature-creation mode. You can cobble together an alien monster from a sizable set of pieces, and add even more after unlocking new ones later in the game. There isn't much to do with a creature after putting it together, though—the simple quests get old pretty quickly, and the combat isn't deep enough to make multiplayer much of a draw. Though spawning new Spores is as fun as ever, you're left to wonder, "Well, then what?" —**DAVID S.**


TORNADO OUTBREAK

DIRT 2

DIRT 2
LAP 1
POS 2/4
Wii

FAMILY FUN FOOTBALL

TORNADO OUTBREAK

RATING: 6.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **KONAMI**
DEVELOPER: **LOOSE CANNON STUDIOS**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Tornado Outbreak is a pretty shameless knockoff of Namco Bandai's Katamari Damacy series, conceptually speaking, but as far as knockoffs go, this one isn't bad. Like in Katamari, your goal in Tornado Outbreak is to grow in size by absorbing objects; you start each level absorbing small objects, but by the end of each you'll be consuming houses and the like. There's something simply visceral and fun about tearing through everything in your path, and optional goals, a chain combo system (essential for earning more time), and a co-op mode add some meat to the game. The overly dramatic yet predictable story is unnecessary, but the action is mostly solid (the simple racing-style stages are the exception) and the music is catchy. **—CHRIS H.**

DIRT 2

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **CODEMASTERS**
DEVELOPER: **SUMO DIGITAL**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

The Wii version of DiRT 2 is a quick-and-dirty approximation of versions of the game for other platforms. What could have been a great game in a revered series just didn't get the undivided attention it needed. Yes, you can steer your car or truck on the track, although they feel about as heavy as shopping carts. And unfortunately there's no good reason to use the motion-control method, unless you enjoy frustration. The game just isn't much fun. It also isn't fun to look at. We're talking "someone stuck a bad Nintendo 64 game on a Wii disc" ugly. At least it's fast. Still, Excite Truck—a Wii launch game—is a much more fun (and certainly prettier) off-roader than DiRT 2. **—RANDY N.**

FAMILY FUN FOOTBALL

RATING: 4.5

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **TECMO**
DEVELOPER: **SEAMLESS ENTERTAINMENT**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

Like Wii Sports did for its sports offerings, Family Fun Football strips down its titular sport to some very basic concepts: passing and running. But unlike Wii Sports, where the games start simple but later reveal depth and skill, FFF starts simple and later becomes boring and monotonous. For instance, once you realize it takes only one "long pass" play to score a touchdown, there's simply no reason to choose any of the other three plays available—ever. There are 10 mildly fun minigames included, as well as the ability to use your Mii as a playable character, but those elements must be unlocked to access them. Grinding through a game to open up its best features? There's simply no fun in that. **—KAISER H.**

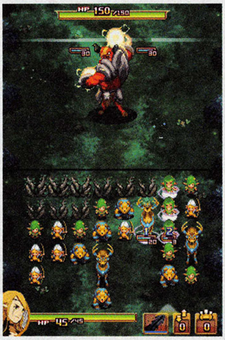
Follow the Evidence

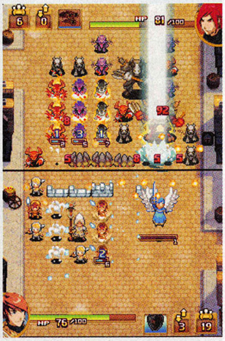
MYSIMS AGENTS

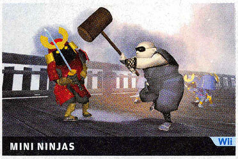
RATING: 7.0

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **ELECTRONIC ARTS**
DEVELOPER: **EA REDWOOD SHORES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE**

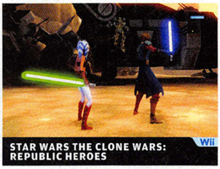
Combine the MySims series with elements from old-school point-and-click adventure games, and you get MySims Agents. As an agent of the Sims Protection Agency, you solve a variety of cases (compelling, for the most part) by talking to other MySims characters, looking for clues, and collecting pieces of evidence. Along the way, you do some platforming and play some minigames (a sliding puzzle to pick locks, for example), which is all good fun for a while. Sadly, this sense of enjoyment tapers off in the second half of the journey. The main problem is that you end up doing a lot of the same stuff over and over again. In particular, more minigames would be welcome, as playing the same ones repeatedly gets old. Chatting with characters can get tiresome, too; it's entertaining when they have funny dialogue, but the humor isn't as consistent as I'd like. The characters themselves are charming and memorable, though, and you can recruit many of them and create teams of three that you send on missions. Mixing and matching characters to create the best possible teams is kind of cool; however, getting frequent messages from them when you're trying to concentrate on your own cases is not. **—JUSTIN C.**







MINI NINJAS Wii



STAR WARS THE CLONE WARS: REPUBLIC HEROES Wii

MINI NINJAS Wii

MYSIMS AGENTS DS

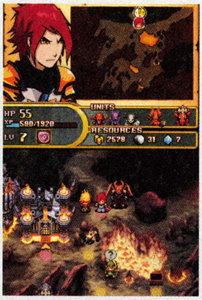
Bedeviled

MIGHT & MAGIC: CLASH OF HEROES

RATING: **8.5**

PLATFORM: **NINTENDO DS**
PUBLISHER: **UBISOFT**
DEVELOPER: **CAPYBARA GAMES**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

2007's Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords proved that RPGs and puzzlers could make beautiful babies, and Might & Magic: Clash of Heroes is the most attractive one yet. The game's lead characters recruit troops and monsters on their quests and then use them as pieces in a battle system that mixes elements of falling-block puzzlers with turn-based strategy. These battles are wholly original, deep, and surprisingly intuitive, making for a richer combat system than any RPG in years.



The overhead exploration scenes are nowhere near as satisfying, since the game restricts you to moving from one predetermined hot spot to another, like a piece on a game board. This is disappointing, but Clash of Heroes offers plenty of other core RPG mechanics, such as leveling up, customizing characters, and even a few side quests. The story features a rotating cast of heroes, each of whom takes the lead for a few hours, building up his or her army and battling a climactic boss before passing the torch to the next hero, who starts from scratch in a new area and with different units to recruit. The varied abilities of each hero's troops keep the battle system fresh, and the developers never run out of new gimmicks to keep players on their toes. Clash of Heroes stumbles only with its bumpy difficulty curve that features both punishingly difficult bosses and long stretches of mindlessly easy battles. But whether you're struggling or cruising, the clever puzzle battles and fast-moving story makes Clash of Heroes easy to pick up and tough to put down. —**CASEY L.**

MINI NINJAS

RATING: **7.5**

PLATFORM: **Wii**
PUBLISHER: **EIDOS**
DEVELOPER: **IO INTERACTIVE**
ESRB: **EVERYONE 10+**

Ninjas, even when they're mini, can do a lot of cool stuff. This is a gamers' game through and through; it has six playable characters, all with different weapons and special attacks; it has 13 magic spells that you learn throughout the adventure; it has potion recipes to buy and ingredients to collect; it has secondary weapons, such as shuriken, to acquire; you can even go fishing essentially any time you want. Furthermore, Mini Ninjas is full of hidden routes, bonus collectibles, flashy ninja moves (such as wall-running), and well-designed levels that allow you to either face the enemy head-on or rely on stealth to sneak through. It all controls and plays well, too; the combat has a fun, solid feel (the subtle autotargeting is nice), and the visually and aurally impressive game world begs to be explored. Despite everything that Mini Ninjas has going for it, however, the game seems unfocused at times. There were several spells, items, and characters that I virtually never used simply because there was no reason to; in this case, less could have been more. Fortunately, aside from slightly disappointing boss fights and a clunky spell/item-use system, the game has few other faults. Overall, Mini Ninjas is an enjoyable adventure. —**CHRIS H.**

ALSO THIS MONTH

The first Deca Sports was widely heralded as the best collection of motion-based athletics outside of Wii Sports. Hudson's sequel, **Deca Sports 2**, is ready to land on Wii, and it features 10 athletic events, including tennis, ice hockey, synchronized swimming, and speed skating.... Activision's **Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2** lets you take control of heroes such as Captain America, Spider-Man, Iron Man, and Thor. The Wii version features four-player co-op, while the DS version has exclusive characters including She-Hulk.... Speaking of entertainment icons, Scooby-Doo and his pals (each with different abilities) are at your command in Warner Bros.'s **Scooby-Doo! First Frights** for Wii and DS. The childlike character redesigns are kind of repulsive, though.... If intergalactic heroes are more your style, LucasArts's **Star Wars The Clone Wars: Republic Heroes** for Wii and DS lets you control clone troopers as well as Jedi.... You can read the review of the Wii version of Electronic Arts's **MySims Agents** on the previous page; the game is also coming to DS.... Customize Lightning McQueen and more than 30 other characters in THQ's **Cars Race O Rama**, a Wii and DS sequel to the hit Pixar movie.... Ignition's **Nostalgia**, a classically inspired turn-based RPG for DS, was looking pretty good the last time we saw it. Expect a review next issue.... Who would guess that time travel and cake baking go together? They do in Majesco's point-and-click action game **Cake Mania 3** for DS. Go figure.

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[REVIEWS ARCHIVE]

Crème de la Crème

If you only play one game this year, make sure it's Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story (9.5) for Nintendo DS. It's easily one of the best games we've played, handheld or otherwise. Of course, those looking for some variety should also check out Muramasa: The Demon Blade (8.0) and NHL 2K10 for Wii, as well as Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box (8.0) for DS.

SCORES REFLECT INDIVIDUAL REVIEWERS' OPINIONS.

Wii

TITLE	SCORE	PUBLISHER	VOL.	ESRB
AC/DC Live: Rock Band Track Pack	N/A	MTV Games	237	T
Animal Crossing: City Folk	8.0	Nintendo	236	E
The Bigs 2	6.0	2K Sports	244	E10+
Boom Blox Bash Party	8.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templars—The Director's Cut	7.0	Ubisoft	241	T
Call of Duty: World at War	8.0	Activision	237	M
Castlevania Judgment	7.0	Konami	236	T
Cate West: The Vanishing Files	N/A	Destineer	240	E10+
The Conduit	8.0	Sega	243	T
Cooking Mama World Kitchen	6.5	Majesco	236	E
Cursed Mountain	7.0	Deep Silver	246	M
Dead Rising: Chop Till You Drop	N/A	Capcom	240	M
Deadly Creatures	7.5	THQ	239	T
Destiny of Zorro	2.5	505	243	E10+
Don King Boxing	5.5	2K Sports	241	T
Excitebots: Trick Racing	8.0	Nintendo	241	E
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time	6.0	Square Enix	240	E10+
Fishing Master: World Tour	7.5	Hudson	238	E
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	7.5	Atari	243	E10+
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra	5.0	Electronic Arts	246	T
Grand Slam Tennis	7.5	Electronic Arts	243	E
Guilty Gear XX Accent Core Plus	7.5	Aksys	241	T
Guitar Hero Metallica	N/A	Activision	240	T
Guitar Hero Smash Hits	N/A	Activision	243	T
Guitar Hero World Tour	8.5	Activision	236	T
Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince	5.5	Electronic Arts	244	E10+
Help Wanted	4.5	Hudson	242	E10+
The House of the Dead: Overkill	8.0	Sega	239	M
Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings	7.5	LucasArts	243	T
Klonoa	9.0	Namco Bandai	241	E10+
Kung Fu Panda: Legendary Warriors	N/A	Activision	236	E10+
The Legend of Spyro: Dawn of the Dragon	N/A	Activision	236	E10+
Let's Tap	7.0	Sega	243	E
Little King's Story	9.0	XSEED	244	T
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa	N/A	Activision	236	E10+
Madden NFL 10	8.0	Electronic Arts	245	E
MadWorld	9.0	Sega	240	M
Major League Baseball 2K9	6.0	2K Sports	240	E
Major Minor's Majestic March	6.0	Majesco	241	E
Marble Saga: Kororinpa	7.5	Hudson	240	E
Metroid Prime Trilogy	N/A	Nintendo	245	T
Monster Lab	6.5	Eidos	236	E10+
MotoGP	4.0	Capcom	240	E
The Munchables	7.0	Namco Bandai	243	E
Mushroom Men: The Spore Wars	8.0	Gamecock	236	E10+
Muramasa: The Demon Blade	8.0	Ignition	246	T
MySims Party	5.0	Electronic Arts	240	E
MySims Racing	N/A	Electronic Arts	243	E
NASCAR Kart Racing	6.0	EA Sports	238	E
Need for Speed Undercover	6.5	Electronic Arts	236	T
Neighborhood Games	N/A	THQ	238	E
Neopets Puzzle Adventure	N/A	Capcom	236	E
New Play Control! Donkey Kong Jungle Beat	N/A	Nintendo	242	E10+
New Play Control! Mario Power Tennis	N/A	Nintendo	239	E
New Play Control! Pikmin	N/A	Nintendo	239	E
NHL 2K10	8.0	2K Sports	246	E10+
Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian: The Video Game	N/A	Majesco	242	E10+
Onechanbara: Bikini Zombie Slayers	6.5	D3Publisher	240	M
Overlord: Dark Legend	7.0	Codemasters	244	T
Phantom Brave: We Meet Again	8.0	NIS America	243	T
Pop Star Guitar	N/A	XS Games	236	T
Pro Evolution Soccer 2009	N/A	Konami	240	E
Punch-Out!!	8.5	Nintendo	242	E10+
Quantum of Solace	5.0	Activision	237	T
Rayman Raving Rabbids TV Party	5.5	Ubisoft	236	E10+
Ready 2 Rumble Revolution	5.0	Atari	240	T
Reel Fishing: Angler's Dream	N/A	Natsume	243	E
Resident Evil Archives	N/A	Capcom	244	M
Rock Band 2	9.0	MTV Games	237	T
Rock Band Track Pack Volume 2	N/A	MTV Games	237	T
Rubik's World	N/A	The Game Factory	236	E
Rune Factory Frontier	7.5	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	E10+
Rygar: The Battle of Argus	7.0	Tecmo	236	T
Samurai Shodown Anthology	N/A	SNK Playmore	242	T
Shaun White Snowboarding: Road Trip	7.0	Ubisoft	236	E10+
SimAnimals	N/A	Electronic Arts	238	E
Skate It	6.0	Electronic Arts	237	E
Sonic and the Black Knight	8.0	Sega	239	E10+
Sonic Unleashed	8.0	Sega	236	E10+
Spectrobes: Origins	5.5	Disney	246	E10+
Spider-Man: Web of Shadows	6.5	Activision	236	T
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Lightsaber Duels	4.0	LucasArts	236	T
Tales of Symphonia: Dawn of the New World	8.0	Namco Bandai	236	T
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	7.0	Ubisoft	238	M
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	9.0	Electronic Arts	243	E
Tomb Raider Underworld	7.0	Eidos	236	T
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen	5.5	Activision	245	T
Ultimate Shooting Collection	N/A	UFO	237	E
Up	6.5	THQ	242	E
Valhalla Knights: Eldar Saga	4.0	XSEED	246	T
Virtua Tennis 2009	7.0	Sega	244	E
We Ski and Snowboard	6.5	Namco Bandai	239	E
Wii Sports Resort	8.5	Nintendo	245	E
WordJong Party	N/A	Destineer	238	E

REVIEWER NOTES

MURAMASA: THE DEMON BLADE

I really want to love Muramasa, but despite the game's jaw-dropping scenery and the kind of retro-style 2-D gameplay I adore, I only *like* the game. The combat is just too repetitive, and I find it annoying that my swords constantly lose energy as I use them, even while blocking. Instead of feeling encouraged to mix up my blades and vary my attacks, I feel like I'm losing something while doing nothing wrong. **—CHRIS SL.**

CURSED MOUNTAIN

Cursed Mountain's story and setting are certainly compelling, but the scares—the entire point of a survival-horror game—are virtually nonexistent.

—JUSTIN C.

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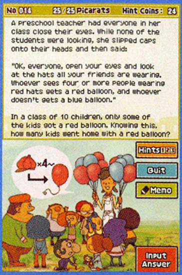
MEGA MAN STAR FORCE 3

Mega Man Star Force 3 came out only a few months ago, but it has a 2008 copyright date on it—which is appropriate, since it's so much like last year's Star Force 2. Granted, there are minor changes to the action-based RPG formula, but it's mostly the same, and the premise is wearing thin. I'd love to see this series take a hiatus and come back fully refreshed (hopefully without so many random battles). **—CHRIS H.**

WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009	8.0	THQ	236	T
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	5.0	Activision	243	T
NINTENDO DS				
Age of Empires: Mythologies	7.0	THQ	236	E10+
Ant Nation	2.0	Konami	245	E
Avalon Code	8.5	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	E10+
Big Bang Mini	8.5	SouthPeak	237	E
Black Sigil: Blade of the Exiled	5.0	Graffiti	242	E
Bleach: The 3rd Phantom	4.0	Sega	246	T
Blue Dragon Plus	8.0	Ignition	239	E
Boing! Docomodake DS	7.0	Ignition	239	E
Broken Sword: Shadow of the Templar–The Director's Cut	N/A	Ubisoft	240	T
Call of Duty: World at War	N/A	Activision	236	T
The Chase: Felix Meets Felicity	5.0	Atari	238	E
Chrono Trigger	9.0	Square Enix	236	E10+
C.O.R.E.	5.5	Graffiti	242	M
The Dark Spire	5.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Dawn of Discovery	8.5	Ubisoft	244	E
Dokapon Journey	4.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Don King Boxing	N/A	2K Sports	240	T
Dragon Quest V: Hand of the Heavenly Bride	8.5	Square Enix	239	E
Elebits: The Adventures of Kai and Zero	7.0	Konami	237	E
Emergency! Disaster Rescue Squad	N/A	Destineer	240	E10+
Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: Echoes of Time	6.5	Square Enix	240	E10+
Fire Emblem: Shadow Dragon	8.5	Nintendo	239	E10+
Flower, Sun, and Rain	6.0	Marvelous Entertainment USA/XSEED	240	T
Fossil Fighters	8.0	Nintendo	246	E
Gardening Mama	8.0	Majesco	240	E
Gauntlet	7.5	Eidos	236	T
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	N/A	Atari	243	E
G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra	5.0	Electronic Arts	245	E10+
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	9.0	Rockstar	241	M
Guitar Hero On Tour: Decades	7.0	Activision	237	E10+
Guitar Hero On Tour: Modern Hits	7.0	Activision	244	E10+
Harvest Moon: Frantic Farming	8.0	Natsume	243	E
Henry Hatsworth in the Puzzling Adventure	8.0	Electronic Arts	240	E
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey	4.0	505	246	E10+
Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings	N/A	LucasArts	243	T
Jake Hunter Detective Story: Memories of the Past	6.0	Aksys	242	T
Knights in the Nightmare	8.0	Atlus	243	T
Kung Fu Panda: Legendary Warriors	N/A	Activision	236	E10+
Legacy of Ys: Books I & II	7.5	Atlus	238	T
The Legend of Spyro: Dawn of the Dragon	N/A	Activision	236	E
The Legendary Starfy	7.0	Nintendo	243	E
LEGO Battles	5.0	Warner Bros.	243	E
The Lord of the Rings: Conquest	5.0	Electronic Arts	238	E10+
Luminous Arc 2	7.0	Atlus	236	T
Lux-Pain	4.0	Ignition	240	T
Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa	N/A	Activision	236	E
Magician's Quest: Mysterious Times	7.5	Konami	242	E10+



A preschool teacher had everyone in her class close their eyes. While none of the students were looking, she slipped caps onto their heads and then said:

"OK, everyone, open your eyes and look at the hats all your friends are wearing. Whoever sees four or more people wearing red hats gets a red balloon, and whoever doesn't gets a blue balloon."

In a class of 10 children, only some of the kids got a red balloon. Knowing this, how many kids went home with a red balloon?

PROFESSOR LAYTON AND THE DIABOLICAL BOX

While I haven't finished Diabolical Box yet (some of the puzzles are pretty darn tricky), I've enjoyed what I've played so far. The game has everything I liked about Layton's first adventure, only more of it. —JUSTIN C.

METROID PRIME TRILOGY

When it was first announced that Samus was going first-person, everyone scoffed. But Retro Studios did our girl proud with this incredible trilogy, now assembled on a single Wii disc. —STEVE T.

NEW PLAY CONTROL! DONKEY KONG JUNGLE BEAT

This new version of Donkey Kong Jungle Beat has been tweaked enough that it challenges me in all-new ways—I'm still working on my "perfect game." It's a real testament to what a great platformer this is that it could lose its unique bongo controls, have them replaced with something pretty different, and still be one of my favorite games. —RANDY N.

Mario & Luigi: Bowser's Inside Story	9.5	Nintendo	246	E
Mega Man Star Force 3: Red Joker/Black Ace	6.0	Capcom	244	E
Metal Slug 7	7.5	Ignition	236	T
Miami Law	3.0	Hudson	243	T
Monster Lab	8.0	Eidos	236	E10+
Moon	7.5	Mastiff	236	T
Mushroom Men: Rise of the Fungi	5.0	Gamecock	236	E
My DoItAll	N/A	Tomy	239	E
My World, My Way	7.0	Atlus	239	E
MySims Party	N/A	Electronic Arts	240	E
MySims Racing	N/A	Electronic Arts	243	E
Naruto Shippuden: Ninja Council 4	5.0	Tomy	243	E10+
Neopets Puzzle Adventure	6.0	Capcom	236	E
Overlord Minions	7.0	Codemasters	244	E10+
Peggle Dual Shot	8.5	PopCap	240	E
Personal Trainer: Cooking	N/A	Nintendo	237	E
Personal Trainer: Math	N/A	Nintendo	239	E
Personal Trainer: Walking	N/A	Nintendo	243	E
Pokémon Platinum Version	9.0	Nintendo	241	E
Pokémon Ranger: Shadows of Almia	8.0	Nintendo	236	E
Prince of Persia: The Fallen King	7.0	Ubisoft	237	E
Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box	8.0	Nintendo	246	E10+
Puzzle Quest: Galactrix	8.0	D3Publisher	240	E10+
Quantum of Solace	6.0	Activision	237	T
Rayman Raving Rabbids TV Party	N/A	Ubisoft	236	E10+
Retro Game Challenge	8.0	XSEED	237	RP
Rhythm Heaven	9.0	Nintendo	241	E
Rockin' Pretty	N/A	Aksys	244	E
Roogoo Attack	4.0	SouthPeak	243	E
Rubik's World	N/A	The Game Factory	236	E
Rune Factory 2: A Fantasy Harvest Moon	7.0	Natsume	237	E
Shaun White Snowboarding	N/A	Ubisoft	236	E
Shin Megami Tensei: Devil Summoner	8.0	Atlus	244	T
SimAnimals	N/A	Electronic Arts	238	E
Skate It	5.5	Electronic Arts	237	E
Space Bust-A-Move	7.0	Taito	245	E
Star Wars The Clone Wars: Jedi Alliance	6.0	LucasArts	236	E
Steal Princess	6.0	Atlus	241	E10+
Suikoden: Tierkreis	7.0	Konami	240	E10+
Super Robot Taisen OG Saga: Endless Frontier	7.0	Atlus	241	T
Tokyo Beat Down	6.0	Atlus	240	T
Tom Clancy's EndWar	N/A	Ubisoft	236	T
Tomb Raider Underworld	N/A	Eidos	236	T
Tony Hawk's Motion	4.0	Activision	237	E
Touch Mechanic	5.0	Aspyr	241	E
TrackMania DS	7.0	Atlus	240	E
Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen	7.0	Activision	245	E10+
Treasure World	N/A	Aspyr	244	E
Valkyrie Profile: Covenant of the Plume	9.0	Square Enix	240	T
The Wizard of Oz: Beyond the Yellow Brick Road	6.5	XSEED	246	E
World Championship Games	N/A	The Game Factory	240	E
WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2009	4.0	THQ	236	T
Zenses: Oceans	N/A	The Game Factory	236	E
Zenses: Rainforest	N/A	The Game Factory	236	E
Zubo	6.5	Electronic Arts	240	E10+

FANDOM

Hungry for More

Artist Stan Tanaka illustrates his own version of WiiWare title Major League Eating: The Game.

Of all the great game-inspired fan art we've received here at Nintendo Power, this might be the most unexpected. What you see is the work of Stan Tanaka, a 34-year-old graphic artist from Chicago, Illinois. When Major League Eating: The Game was announced for WiiWare last year, his first thought was that of having seen a television special titled *Man vs. Beast*, which pit legendary competitive eater Takeru Kobayashi against a Kodiak bear in a contest to eat 50 hot dogs.

Combining his love of eating, drawing, and video games, Tanaka got to work on a set of images that would depict that epic sausage-ingesting contest, albeit with the inclusion of Wii Remote controllers to signify the playing of the game. "When I saw some screenshots of the video game, I knew I had to draw something to celebrate the innovation of the Nintendo Wii and Kobayashi's gastronomic prowess," explains Tanaka.

The primary image really catches your eye—the fully-colored close-up of Kobayashi and the Kodiak angling for the same hot dog presumably demonstrates the intensity of playing the WiiWare title (or actually competing in a hot-dog-eating contest, for that matter).

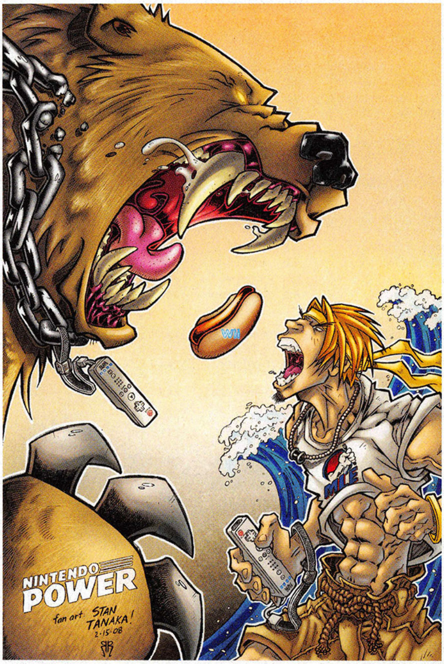
Tanaka says he's been drawing for most of his life, and while he's attended a few art classes here and there, he claims that most of his skill comes from reading comic books, drawing regularly, and working with other talented artists. "If you draw with and surround yourself with great artists, you get a lot of constructive criticism, you learn so much from osmosis, and you're constantly challenged to raise your own game," asserts Tanaka. He also points to current comic artists, including Jeff Matsuda, Joe Madureira, and Jim Lee, as strong inspirations and influences on his craft.

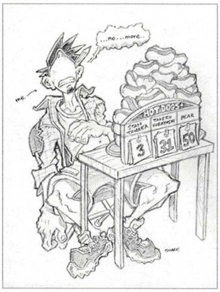
In addition to the main image, which was colored by his associate Rachelle Rosenberg, Tanaka sent along some pencil sketches that add hilarious context to the artwork. One image depicts Tanaka conducting "research" for the artwork, which shows him nursing an upset stomach after eating just three hot dogs (compared to dozens more for the other eaters). Additionally, there are a few simple sketches of the Kobayashi/Kodiak conflict, including one of Kobayashi taunting the bear with a hot dog on a string. The set is rounded out by a drawing of Tanaka himself atop the Wii Balance Board, attempting to work off the hot dogs from before.

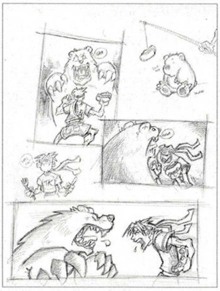
Tanaka says the drawings took a few days to complete, though he found it hard to focus due to interruptions from marathon sessions of playing Punch-Out!! and Mario Kart Wii. And as for the actual Major League Eating: The Game, which includes both Kobayashi and the Kodiak bear as playable characters? Amusingly, Tanaka hasn't played it yet, though he says he's "definitely looking forward to it!"

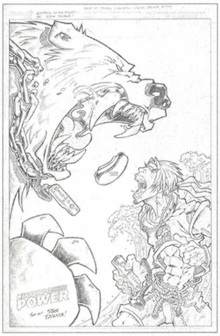
For more of Tanaka and Rosenberg's handiwork, be sure to check out their respective DeviantArt pages at http://stanaka.deviantart.com and http://rachellerosenberg.deviantart.

—ANDREW H.





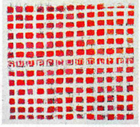




MUSIC

Game Boy Traffic Jams

Nintendo Power alumni Supercommute for their chip-hop debut.



It's hard to imagine anyone truly enjoying a lengthy commute to and from work, but two former Nintendo of America employees and Nintendo Power alumni have found a very cool way to pass the time. The rhythmic ebb and flow of traffic combined with the melodic bleeps of an original Game Boy are a source of musical inspiration for hip-hop wordsmith Andy Hartpence (aka Wheelie Cyberman) and chiptune musician Andy Myers (aka Stenobot). The tunes for the duo's new chip-hop project, appropriately dubbed Supercommuter, were crafted almost entirely during their daily treks along State Route 520 between Seattle and Bellevue.

Each morning Myers hops a bus to work and composes 8-bit beats and melodies on his trusty Game Boy while creeping along in rush-hour traffic. "I always wish I had more time to work on music," he says, "so when I started making Game Boy music, working on [it] during my Eastside commute seemed like a no brainer." Myers later emails the audio files to Hartpence, who burns the music to CD and comes up with lyrics in the car as he drives to work. "Essentially the core composition of the songs all happens while we commute to and from our 9-to-5 jobs," says Hartpence, who adds writing songs en route to work is great because it doesn't cut into his day. "It's time I had to spend commuting in the car anyway."

With all the songwriting laid down along the highway, Supercommuter's masters converged in the studio earlier this year with producer Tron Juan to lay down the master tracks for the full-length album they released this summer. The end result is a highly polished and impressive chip-hop masterpiece featuring lyrical imagery about robotopian societies, the deepest reaches of space, omniscient computer cyber deities, and other sci-fi quirkiness. Fans of Hartpence's work as the front man Seattle hip-hop group Optimus Rhyme will find much to love about his vocal delivery and the robotic nerdiness found on Supercommuter's self-titled CD debut. "I guess I totally geeked out on this one," Hartpence admits. The chiptune foundation Myers delivers is a perfect fit, as he manages to coax a particularly moody, sci-fi sound out of his Game Boy that serves as the pulsing power source for the project.

Myers and Hartpence are both serious video game enthusiasts, and they've penned a multitude of content for Nintendo Power, which is how they met. In a way, Supercommuter itself was born out of the Community section of the magazine, says Myers. Realizing there was a richly growing subculture loosely structured on a cornucopia of Nintendo-related stuff, he began compiling material for what would eventually become the Community section. It made its debut in the magazine with a two-page story that Myers wrote on 8-bit music. While researching and writing the piece, he began to experiment with chiptunes himself. "After the article was finished and published, I just kept on going," he says. "I never stopped. For me, that's how Supercommuter started. So it's pretty awesome to be in Nintendo Power. It's like it's all coming full circle." —**NATHAN M.**

supercommuter

ABOVE *and* BEYOND

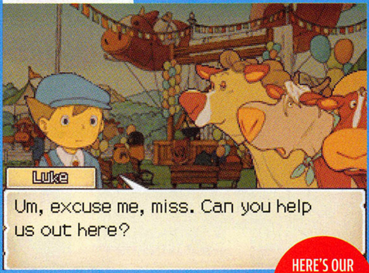
Got art, cosplay, case mods, etc.? Send them to us via email to **community@nintendopower.com** or via snail mail to Nintendo Power/Community c/o Future US, 4000 Shoreline Court, STE 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080. We'll print the best stuff!

WRITE YOUR OWN CAPTION

Screen Test

Writing captions makes readers feel good, as the Ghostbusters: The Video Game captions below illustrate. There are no ghosts this month, but there are cows. Cows by themselves aren't quite as scary as ghosts, but talking cows? Very scary. If you agree (or even if you don't), send a caption to **screentest@nintendopower.com.**

THIS MONTH'S SHOT



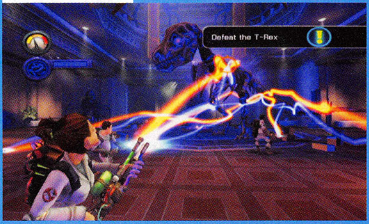
Luke

Um, excuse me, miss. Can you help us out here?

Don't get those cows angry, Luke. You wouldn't like them when they're mad.

HERE'S OUR CAPTION. THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER?

VOLUME 245'S SHOT



"If a human explodes faster than the speed of life when the streams cross, does that mean it brings fossils back to life?" —**SHEA M.**

"They were all deeply saddened when they realized that their meat was past medium rare." —**DARIUS H.**

"And so the guests enjoyed a smashing finale to the anti-archaelogists meeting." —**TOBIAS R.**

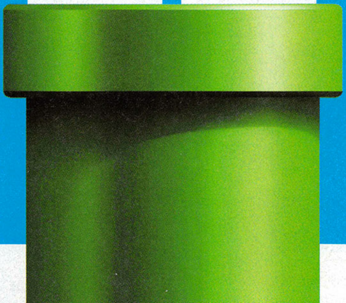
"OK, who mixed up the shrink ray with a growth ray?" —**JOHN S.**

"What the...? Sorry, big guy. This is room 201. If you're looking for Jurassic Park, that's next door." —**ALEC M.**

NEXT MONTH

DECEMBER 2009 • VOL. 248

Next issue will offer a fresh look at New Super Mario Bros. Wii, the plumbers' first 2-D console platformer since the Super NES! (Wow, has it been 18 years already?) Expect an in-depth, hands-on report on the season's biggest game. (That is, if we can put the controllers down long enough to write it—no guarantees!) Plus, we'll celebrate the first five years of the world-conquering Nintendo DS. Primp those 'staches, and we'll see you in 30!



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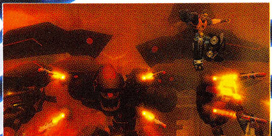

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